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On Ho Chi Minh Trail**

FEBRUARY
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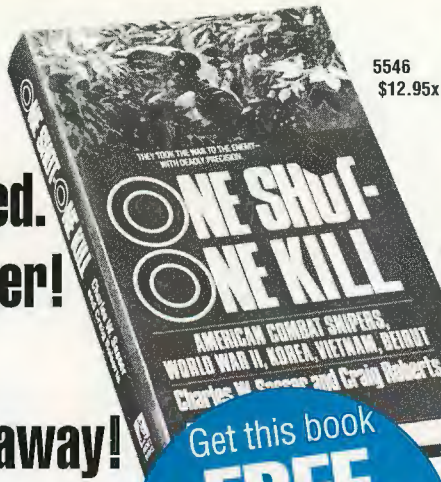
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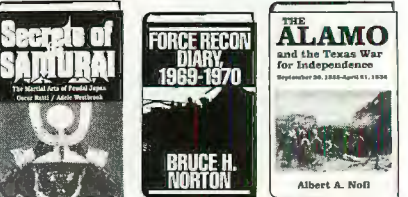
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Now, squeeze the trigger!
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One kill—over a mile away!**



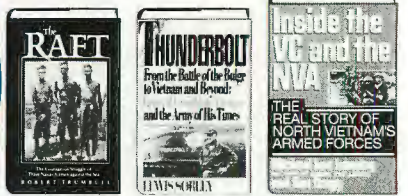
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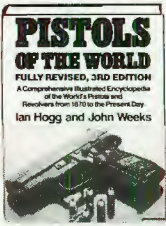
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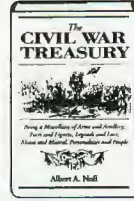
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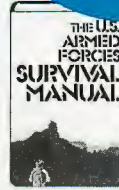
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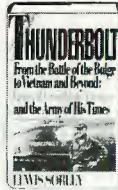
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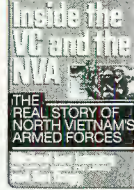
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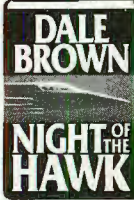
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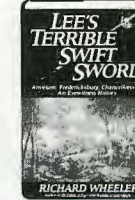
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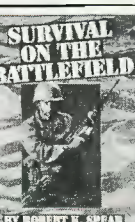
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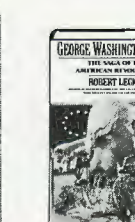
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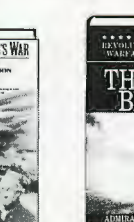
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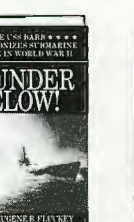
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Triumph Of The Human Spirit

At least this once, it is satisfying to have been proved wrong.

Most of us, and for what seemed like good reasons, spent the last 40 or so years convinced that the only way to get anywhere near where we are now with the Soviet Union was to fight and win World War III.

We completely underrated the forces of decay within what Ronald Reagan accurately termed the "Evil Empire." It was no secret that Leninist socialism was an economic disaster, imposing a Third World standard of living on the people of major industrial powers. But we overrated the ability of the KGB and its surrogates to keep the lid on; we underrated the degree to which contact with, and knowledge of, how much better things were on the Western side of the Iron Curtain fanned the fires of discontent; we missed altogether the effect of economic failure on the ability of the Leninist state to support the vast military forces required by its internal political imperatives.

It was no secret that the nationalities in the "jailhouse of nations" hated their overlords and yearned for deliverance. But we gave too much credit to the supposedly awesome effectiveness of the KGB and the other organs of repression, and too little credit to the unquenchable fires of freedom and national identity. It is probably no coincidence that the blazes sparked first in Hungary, Poland and Lithuania; these were long-established kingdoms when the princes of Muscovy were still paying protection money to the Mongols.

It was hardly a secret that the revolutionary slogans of Leninism had become a catechism learned by rote and recited without conviction on appropriate occasions. But we failed to recognize the effect of a change of generation. The conspiratorial revolutionaries, who had truly believed in, fought for and risked their lives for the glories of the socialist revolution eventually, as is the way of all flesh, died off or retired. Their places were

taken by career minded yes-men, for whom party membership and the visibly zealous reciting of slogans were the keys to career success.

It's hard to imagine a hard-core revolutionary like Walter Ulbricht rolling over and playing dead the way Honecker did. It's hard to imagine Felix Dzerzhinski botching a coup as did Boris Pugo; and so on. At all but the lowest levels of the state and party apparatus, the holders of power were Russian intellectuals. Now the typical Russian intellectual needs to have an ideological justification for whatever he does, especially for the grim and harsh things required to "defend the revolution." When the ideology goes, the ability to compromise common decency in the name of a "higher" cause also goes. Knowing this, we should not have been surprised by events; but we were.

Along this line, it is no coincidence that all surviving Stalinist regimes — China, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos and Cuba — are ruled by old revolutionaries who, as young men, made the "long march."

It was no secret that Leninist totalitarianism tried with significant success to destroy or co-opt any focus of identification and loyalty that might compete with the party-state for the hearts and minds of people — especially the churches.

We failed to recognize the degree to which the deterioration of ethical values that this inevitably brought on undermined the social structure within the Leninist paradise, a fact that is now haunting the newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union as they are forced to deal with almost universal corruption.

In short, we failed to draw the obvious inferences of what we knew and believed; we gave too much credit to the apparent effectiveness of the apparatus of repression of the totalitarian police state, and too little to the human spirit.

Long live the human spirit.

— Col. Alex McColl ☞

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FEATURES



Afrikaans AK — page 30

Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

NO SMOKING GUNS

Henry Kissinger's testimony to the Senate Select Committee on POW/MIAs rebuked suggestions that the Nixon administration ignored POWs to help end the Vietnam War 28

AFRIKAANS AK

An in-depth look at South Africa's R4 series of assault rifles, arguably the most refined Kalashnicopies produced by any country Peter G. Kokalis 30

ALONG BOSNIA'S HO CHI MINH TRAIL

Surrounded and outnumbered, Bosnian Moslems are defending their homeland against incredible odds. Enter American Special Forces vet Giles Pace, who's running a dangerous gauntlet to keep their supply line open Peter Douglas 36

LOST LINEBACKERS

SOF talks with survivors of the first B-52 shot down over Hanoi during Operation Linebacker II, the 1972 "Christmas bombing" that brought North Vietnam back to the bargaining table Dale B. Cooper 40

SILVER BADGE OF COURAGE

Successful prisoner snatch on Ho Chi Minh Trail earns SOG team leader coveted unique Browning Hi-Power John L. Plaster 46



Bosnia — page 36

Photo: Peter Douglas



COLUMNS

Bulletin Board 6
No Foxes In Foxholes

FLAK 12
Whose Vote Was Wasted?

World SitRep 16

Battle Blades 18
Al Mar Warrior

Full Auto 20
"Wet Affairs" Weaponry

Adventure Quartermaster27
Missile Base For Sale

Advertisers Index 74

Supply Locker 75

Classified 79



Poachers — page 62

Photo: Galen Geer

RIPPED CLOAK, RUSTY DAGGER Scott French
KGB agents, CIA spooks and spies of all types schmooze at first-ever international spyfest in Sofia, Bulgaria — their mission: finding work after the Cold War 52

PROJECT TRIGGERLOCK James L. Pate
The BATF, in conjunction with other government agencies, initiates program to put armed felons behind bars for a long time. But are gun-owners' rights again being trampled in the name of law enforcement? 56

BODY HEAT Galen Geer
Second-generation Game Finder hand-held IR sensor gives you the ability to detect persons or animals in complete darkness, even through solid objects 60

STALKING POACHERS Galen Geer
SOF's Outdoor Affairs Editor goes along and reports on anti-poaching op in South African bush 62



COVER

American Special Forces vet Giles Pace, armed with 7.62x39mm Yugoslavian M70AB2, rides "shotgun" on supply truck weaving its way through Serbian lines to surrounded Moslem positions. Photo: Peter Douglas

BULLETIN BOARD



Changing of the guard complete? Looks like the independent government in Croatia is here to stay: They now have a ceremonial guard at the presidential palace in Zagreb. Photo: Robin Anthony

TRAINLOADS OF POWs FROM KOREA TO SIBERIA!

Retired U.S. Army Colonel Philip Corso, a former aide to President Eisenhower, dropped a POW/MIA bombshell in a November news conference by announcing that at least one trainload, and perhaps as many as three, of captured Allied soldiers from the Korean War disappeared into Siberia after passing through the Manchurian region of China.

A former intelligence officer with the Army in Korea and Japan, Corso said he advised Eisenhower in 1955 to establish a policy of declaring American POWs dead if they were believed to have fallen into Soviet custody. Corso told reporters he had recommended that knowledge of such U.S. troops be kept from the public because such prisoners were unlikely to survive and the Soviets would never admit holding them — so they were, in effect, “dead men.” Corso recalled Eisenhower’s response as: “I think you’re right. I accept your recommendation.”

Not only did Eisenhower and all subsequent presidents deny knowledge of American POWs held by the Soviets but, according to POW author-researcher Jim Sanders, operatives under a number of administrations have been caught red-handed while hiding or altering archival documents relating to POWs in Soviet hands — even shadowing and burglarizing researchers who were getting too close to the truth.

COMMISSION VOTE: NO FOXES IN FOXHOLES

A sharply divided (8-6) presidential commission has recommended that women should be allowed to serve in combat aboard frigates, destroyers, aircraft carriers and other warships, but that women should not be allowed to serve on submarines or amphibious vessels, nor should they be allowed to serve in air- or ground-combat units.

Although the commission’s decisions are not binding, President-elect Clinton has previously indicated he will seriously consider the panel’s findings. Lifting the ban on combat roles for Navy women will require congressional action. Women, who currently comprise 11% of uniformed service personnel, are barred from direct combat assignments by existing regulations.

KUWAITI MINE UPDATE

Some 4,000 EOD personnel and laborers from the United States, Britain, France, Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan and even Bangladesh continue to toil in an effort to rid Kuwait of the estimated half-million land mines left behind by retreating Iraqis during the Gulf War. So far, some 50 men have been killed — including the entire five-man Kuwaiti team — and scores injured in the cleanup attempt. There have also been an estimated 1,500 civilian casualties from the ordnance.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Denver’s city ordinance banning “assault” weapons has come under legal attack from the Colorado Attorney General’s office. In court, Assistant Attorney General David Kopel argued that the Denver City Council violated citizens’ fundamental rights when it passed the ban three years ago, stating the ban “denigrated the right to self-defense ... the attorney general is here to vindicate the rights of the citizens of Colorado.”

Noting that large-capacity, detachable-magazine weapons are ideal guns for ordinary citizens to defend themselves with, Kopel pointed out that only 1% to 3% percent of “gun crimes” involve the use of semiautomatic weapons, noting that “the ordinance takes away guns that are superior for self-defense.” He added, “the Constitution doesn’t require the use of inferior weapons for the defense of self ...”

SPECOPS CHOPPER DOWNED

While on a joint U.S. Army-Air Force exercise on 30 October, an Air Force MH-60G Pave Hawk from the First Special Operations Wing at Elgin Air Force Base, Florida, crashed into the Great Salt Lake during a storm, some 15 miles west of Hill AFB, Utah. Bad weather hampered rescuers, but the sole survivor among 13 men onboard was saved, though suffering from serious cuts. The remains of the 12 killed in the accident were recovered.

THANKS, NEIGHBORS

After Hurricane Andrew struck, a contingent of 400 Canadian troops mustered to Dade County, Florida, to help with disaster relief. They did a bang-up job of rebuilding two schools, then returned home with little fanfare.

Hey thanks, cousins! Neighbors we can count on are national treasures.

RETURNING EGYPTIAN MUJAHIDEEN ARRESTED

According to Egyptian intelligence sources and senior officials, Egyptian volunteers returning from the holy war against communists in Afghanistan are thought to be part of an organized attempt to destabilize the government of Egypt.

Police have thus far imprisoned some 170 veterans of the Afghan War in a crackdown on Islamic fundamentalists, following clashes between Egyptian security forces and militants.



KGB ALPHA TEAM TRAINING MANUAL

How the Soviets Trained for Personal Combat, Assassination, and Subversion

Preface by Jim Shortt

Now exclusively from Paladin Press, the KGB Alpha Team Training Manual is available for the first time outside the former Soviet Union. It gives you a rare glimpse into how the Soviet military and police special assignment teams protected and defended their country from perceived subversion and sabotage, both inside and outside their borders. Written in 1989 by the chief instructor at the Dynamo sports center in Moscow, the manual borrowed heavily from Spetsnaz text on reconnaissance, physical conditioning, and personal combat but added special sections for the KGB on assassination, sabotage, countersubversion and snatching citizens (Soviet and other, including U.S.) off the streets. It includes a lengthy introduction by Jim Shortt, who trained numerous Western security forces and Afghan mujahideen in anti-Spetsnaz tactics and in 1989 became the first Westerner to train Soviet military troops. 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, softcover, photos, illus., 320 pp. **\$20.00**

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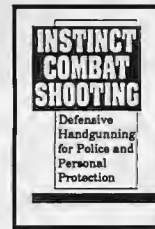
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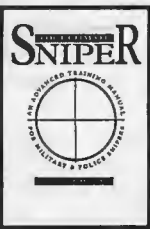
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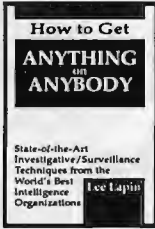
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The former mujahideen are suspected of recent attacks on Egyptian police and Christians, part of a fundamentalist campaign against the government, which is viewed as corrupt and irreligious. The men are presently being held under Egypt's sweeping emergency laws passed after President Anwar Sadat was assassinated by Islamic extremists in 1981: In effect, these laws allow officials to im-

prison suspects indefinitely without charging them with a specific crime.

ORTEGA BROTHERS' BERMUDEZ BLUNDER

The *Washington Times* published an article accusing General Humberto Ortega, head of the Nicaraguan armed forces and brother of former communist dictator Daniel Ortega, of ordering the murder of Colonel Enrique

Bermudez, the former contra Commander 380, who was assassinated early in 1991. The *Times* subsequently published an indignant letter of denial from Gen. Ortega, in which he took issue with the *Times'* report that Bermudez had been felled with a shot from a "specially equipped AK-47." Ortega stated:

"In fact, as reported in the Nicaraguan press since the day of the incident, the murder weapon was a .32-caliber pistol fired from a distance no greater than 2 meters. I did not order the preparation of an assault rifle or any other weapon. Second, the *Times* says Col. Bermudez's body was taken to a military hospital, where the bullets were extracted and disposed of by Nicaraguan police. In fact, Col. Bermudez's body was taken to a civilian hospital run by the Ministry of Health. The forensic medical examiner, an employee of the Ministry of Health, determined that Col. Bermudez was killed by a single bullet that passed through his head, exiting at the right inferior pre-auricular region. Thus, no bullets were extracted or discarded."

As Col. Bermudez's family noted in a letter to SOF, the report from the medical staff at the Lenin Fonseca Hospital did *not* make reference to any particular caliber or projectile. When Col. Bermudez's body was transferred

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to a Miami funeral home, on preparing the remains for burial, funeral technicians noted a jagged wound on the left side of the cranium and no apparent exit wound. This led them to believe there was one entry wound and no exit wound and no projectile, indicating the projectile had been removed in Nicaragua upon extraction of the brain.

For this reason, Col. Bermudez's remains were exhumed and a third examination — the first true forensic examination — was performed by Dade County Medical Examiner Dr. Joe Davis, with a Nicaraguan forensic representative and two FBI forensic personnel in attendance.

According to Dr. Davis, there had been two bullets, which had been fired from right to left, and the entry points were too fleshy for anyone to pinpoint a particular caliber. Further, the exit points on the left side were too jagged for any determination of caliber. It was not until this first true forensic examination upon exhumation that the caliber of the murder weapon was known — and that there had been two rounds fired.

Ortega confidently expressed the facts as "fact" before they were actually known to anyone but the assassins. As Bermudez's family points out, Ortega and the Sandinistas have made a big blunder.

HUMBLE HUMBERTO

And in other news, President Violeta Chamorro threatened to sack Gen. Ortega as head of the Nicaraguan armed forces after he declared his intention to head the Nicaraguan army until 1997 and to not permit the military, which once had 100,000 troops, to be further reduced past its present level of 18,500. Said President Chamorro: "Mr. Ortega can say what he wants, but I want to make clear that he cannot be there until 1997. He can't say that, because he is only the head of the army, and the one who makes the decisions here is me."

WRITER SEEKS JIM THOMPSON

Author Andy Van Der Plaats (3598 Fowler St., Fort Myers, FL 22901) seeks contact with, or information on, one Jim Thompson who served in Southeast Asia with the OSS in World War II, subsequently stayed in-theater and was possibly associated with Bird Air (which later became part of Continental Air Transport). Anyone knowing whereabouts of Thompson or having information on him, please reply in confidence to author at above address.

OOPS

The following paragraph appeared in much abbreviated form in December's "Combat Weaponcraft." We regret the

omission of this information.

"All shots were made from a range of 10 feet, using common weapons. The 9mm, 115-grain FMJ bullets were fired from an H&K MP-5 submachine gun with a 8.85-inch barrel; the other 9mm bullets were fired from a Browning Hi-Power pistol with a 4.75-inch barrel. The .38 Special bullets were fired from a S&W 686 revolver with a 6-inch barrel; the .40 S&W bullets were fired from a S&W 4006 pistol with a 4-inch barrel; the .44 Magnum bullets were fired from a S&W 629 revolver with a 5-inch barrel; the .45 ACP bullets were fired from a Colt Government pistol with a 5-inch barrel, and the 12-gauge shotgun projectiles were fired from a Benelli M1 Super 90 shotgun with an 18-inch Cylinder barrel."

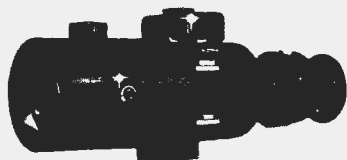
THE REUNION NETWORK

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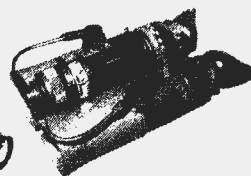
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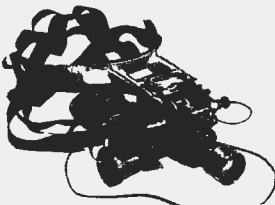
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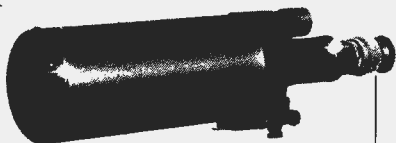
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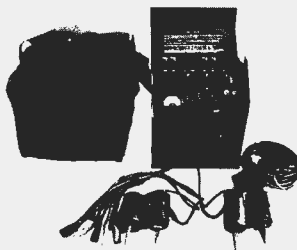


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Election Tally On Animal Issues

- Montana Rep. Ron Marlenee, sponsor of a hunter harassment bill, lost his bid for re-election.
- Barbara Boxer, the shrill California animal rights advocate and author of legislation that would cripple medical research, advanced from House of Representatives to U.S. Senate.
- California voters returned Tom Lantos, co-chairman for Congressional Friends of the Animals Caucus.
- North Carolina voters returned Rep. Charlie Rose, the other co-chair of Congressional Friends of the Animals Caucus; Rose also chairs the House Agriculture Committee, which has jurisdiction over legislation to impose criminal penalties on "animal rights" crimes.
- Texas voters returned Rep. Charlie Stenholm for another term; Stenholm has worked for years to make "animal rights" break-ins and burglaries a federal crime, and his bill was signed into law last fall.
- Pennsylvania voters retired Rep. Peter Kostmayer, sponsor of a bill that would have crippled circuses and rodeos.
- Indiana voters gave the boot to Rep. Jim Jontz, a chronic sponsor of extreme environmental protectionist legislation.
- Manhattan voters showed Rep. Bill Greene the door: He had sponsored legislation that would ban hunting on more than 90 million acres of federally administered public land.
- Oregon voters blocked friend-of-the-spotted-owl Rep. Les AuCoin's bid to unseat Sen. Bob Packwood.
- Arizona voters pounded Proposition 200, an extreme animal rights law promoted as a ban on trapping that would have also outlawed hunting and fishing.

Arsonists Firebomb USDA Research Facilities Offices

On October 24, arsonists firebombed a Department of Agriculture APHIS (Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service) research facility near Logan, Utah, causing an estimated \$100,000 damage. In the early morning raid, terrorists entered the Milville Predator Research Facility, cutting holes in pens in an effort to release more than 50 coyotes used in behavioral and reproductive research. The associated office building was firebombed. Several hours later, the Utah State University office of Associate Professor Fred Knowlton was set ablaze; Knowlton heads the USDA Predator Ecology Project and runs the Milville research facility.

Although no one has claimed responsi-

bility for the arson, police suspect a radical animal-rights terrorist group because of similarities between the USU raid and other attacks in Oregon, Washington and Michigan for which the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) has claimed responsibility. The FBI lists ALF as one of the 10 most dangerous terrorist organizations in the United States.

The FBI, BATF, USU police and Cache County sheriff's office have formed a task force to investigate the crime and coordinate its investigation with parallel task forces in other states where similar attacks have occurred.

Putting People First, the Washington-based citizens group, has learned from an anonymous source that the Utah fires were set by an incendiary bomb fueled by Sterno — a bomb-type similar to devices described in a terrorist handbook put out by the ALF.

The arsonist(s) spray-painted the symbol of a red spiral with four dangling feathers on the burned-out building, believed to be the calling card of Rodney Coronado, a fugitive sketched by the FBI wearing a feathered earring. The FBI is looking for Coronado in connection with his links to the ALF and with a 1991 raid on a research facility at Washington State University: In a message to the press after the WSU arson, ALF wrote, "Until coyotes and other animals run free from the tortuous hand of humankind, no industry or individual is safe from fur animal liberation. The ALF has just begun to fight."

Any person with information regarding the Utah arson attack should contact Cache County Sheriff Sid Groll; phone: 801-752-4103.

The fugitive Coronado, known to also be a member of the radical environmental group Earth First!, recently wrote from the underground a glowing account in the *Earth First! Journal* about ALF and its more than 100 raids on animal research labs in the United States during the past decade.

Suspected ALF Member Held In Contempt

Jonathan Mark Paul, a suspected member of ALF who lived with Rodney Coronado (see above) in 1988 and 1990 was jailed for contempt of court in Spokane, Washington, this past November after refusing to testify before a federal grand jury convened to investigate the August 1991 raid on a WSU animal research facility in the city of Pullman, where damages to documents and facilities were esti-

mated at more than \$50,000. Federal Judge William Neilsen sent Paul to the county slammer until either he testifies or until the grand jury is disbanded.

ALF Hits Swanson Meats

Terrorists from the Animal Liberation Front raided Swanson Meats Inc. in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during the first week of November causing sufficient damage to come under purview of the newly enacted Animal Enterprise Protection Act. The act provides for stiff penalties, including jail time and restitution, for perpetrators of "animal rights" terrorism. This was not the first time Swanson has been attacked, nor was it the only animal user in Minneapolis threatened and vandalized.

A multi-agency task force is currently investigating "animal rights" terrorism; indictments from three sitting grand juries are expected as we appear on newsstands. Representatives of advocate groups opposed to animal rights terrorism predicted there would be an increase in such acts just before indictments are handed down. Noted Kathleen Marquardt of Putting People First, "We need to be ready for whatever they throw at us."

Rodeo Fan Attacked By "Animal Rights" Activist

Labor Day rodeo fan Bob Schamberger was attacked by a drunk, hammer-wielding animal rights protester at the Great Northern Classic Championship Rodeo in Duluth, Minnesota, suffering contusions and lacerations to his head. The assailant, Randolph Schuelke, was arrested leaving the scene and charged with second-degree aggravated assault with a weapon, then jailed. Schamberger said afterward that he felt he would have been killed if he had not ducked. Animal activists at the rodeo passed out literature from the Humane Society of the United States.

Nolan Ryan Effigy Skewered By Animal Boffos

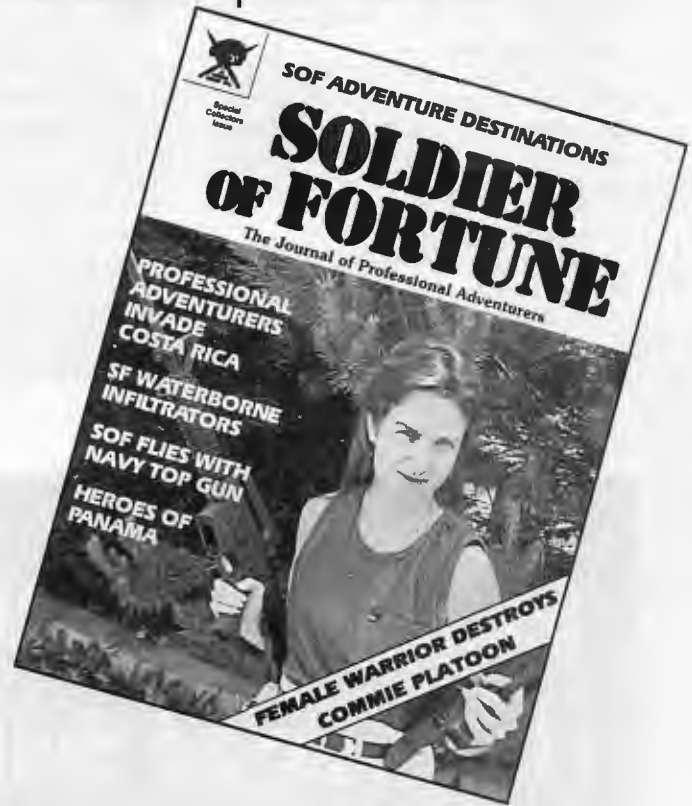
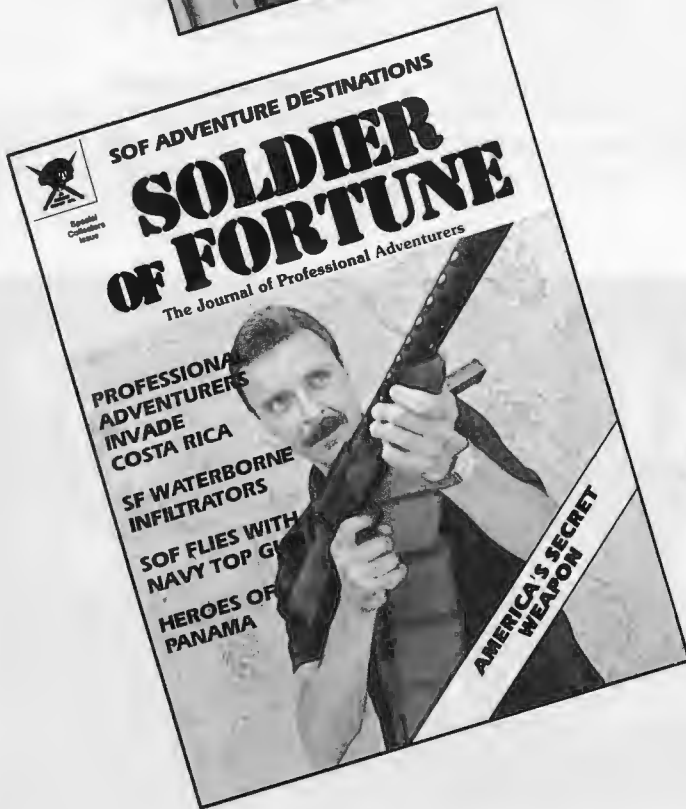
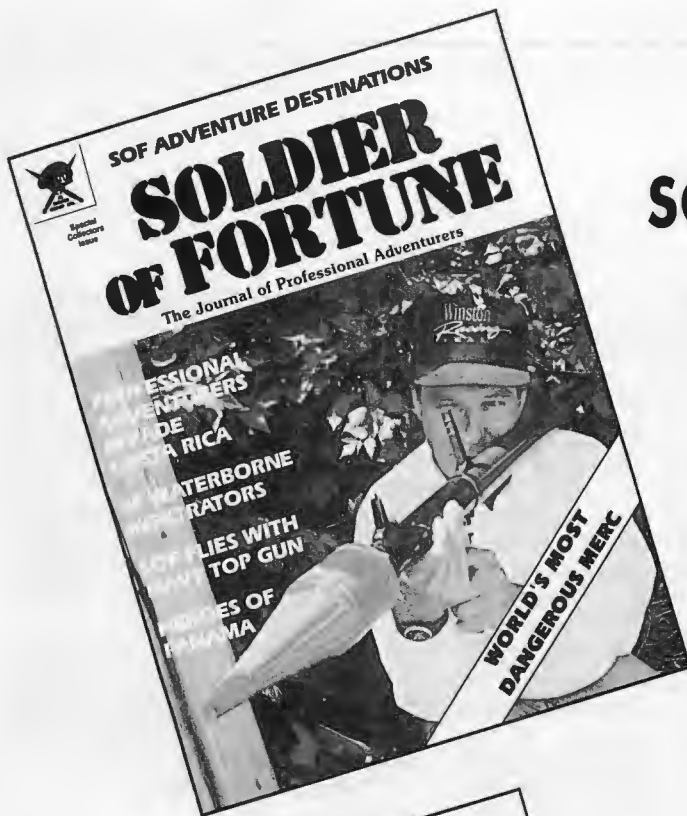
In October, Wayne Pacelle, exec of Fund For Animals, led a large demonstration against hunting outside the Texas Wildlife Expo, held in Austin. The event attracted such well-known sportsmen as baseball great and bow-hunting enthusiast Nolan Ryan, bow-hunting rock star Ted Nugent, businessman George Bush Jr. and Governor Ann Richards. Some 120 demonstrators displayed signs (one promoting the killing of hunters), chanted and displayed a life-size effigy of Ryan with arrows impaling its chest and crotch. ✕

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BOTTOM LINE ON STOPPING POWER

After reading Roberts and Wolberg's excellent, technically correct rebuttal to Marshall and Sanow's "definitive study" of handgun stopping power [Dec. '92 *SOF*], I wanted to point out that there is an alternative to spending \$40 and wading through 240 pages of terrible "sucking chest wounds" in Knox gelatin and hideous "through-and-through" gunshot wounds in anesthetized pork.

It is called "Glover's Law" and it holds true for any caliber from .22 LR all the way up to 105mm fin-stabilized, discarding sabot, Harvard-educated smart rounds. It goes like this:

*"Whatever you brought
If it's all you got
Get off the first shot
Hit the right spot
And hit 'em a lot"*

Mike DiMatteo
San Diego, California

WASTED VOTES

Who wasted their votes, gun-owners who voted Libertarian or those who voted Republican?

Those who voted for George Bush because Clinton is for gun control clearly wasted their votes. Bush had already banned imports of semiautomatic replicas of assault rifles by executive order, and would have signed the Brady Bill as soon as the Democrats in Congress met his price.

The Republican Party will not change their ways until the Libertarian Party becomes a credible threat to them. This will not happen until Libertarians get elected in large numbers or the Republicans see themselves losing voters they have long taken for granted.

If Republicans saw millions of gun-owners they take for granted voting Libertarian, they would again become defenders of the Second Amendment. A few percent less for Bush would not have changed the outcome of the

election. A few percent more for the Libertarian Party might have changed the Republican Party's attitude in future elections.

If a million gun-owners had voted Libertarian this time, they would not have to spend all their money and burn out their volunteers gathering signatures on ballot petitions next time. They would have received enough votes to gain automatic ballot qualification in all 50 states instead of the 20 or so they got.

Until gun-owners quit wasting their votes by voting for Republicans, Republicans will operate on a business-as-usual basis and gun-owners' rights will slowly but surely disappear.

Christopher Maxwell
Chicago, Illinois

UNARMED AND READY

As usual, you hit the mark with your articles, "Riot Control" [Dec. '92] and "Does The U.S. Army Have a Fear of Firearms?" [Nov. '91]

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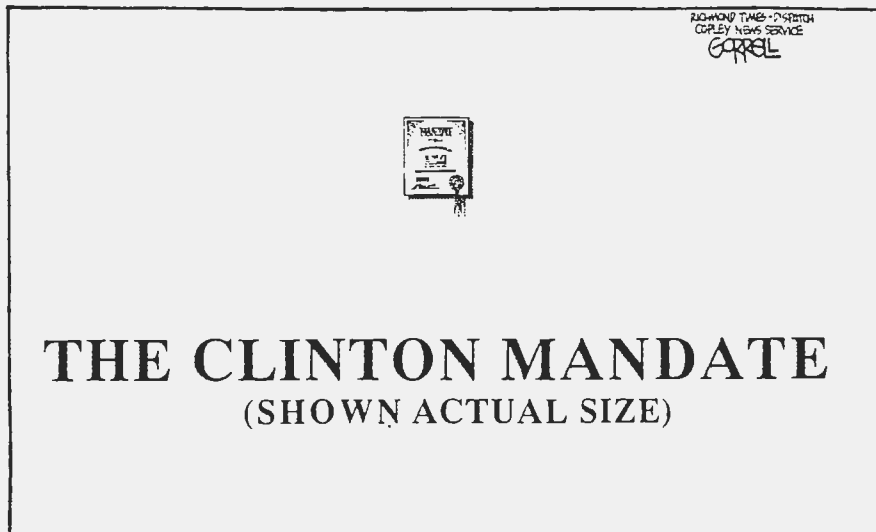
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In a world of compromise, some don't.

I served for three weeks with the Army National Guard during the L.A. riots. The timid officer corps of the National Guard during the riots very reluctantly issued live ammo and/or bayonets. When they finally did (after placing National Guardsmen in dangerous, life-threatening situations without any means of defense against possible armed confrontation), they still insisted on suicidal "safeguards" like keeping all loaded magazines in closed pouches and even putting tape across magazine tops, over the bullets.

If a drive-by had occurred, by the time anyone could unsnap a pouch, pull out a magazine, remove sticky tape from bullets (one-handed), insert a magazine in the magazine well (providing leftover sticky residue didn't hang up the magazine), chamber a round and then sight in on the source of incoming fire, the shooters would be gone down the street and around the corner. And probably several guardsmen would be dead or wounded.



Guardsmen were, and still are, treated as little kids rather than adult, trained soldiers (many of whom are Vietnam, Panama or Desert Storm vets).

This mentality, along with little live range-fire practice, has destroyed troop morale and forced many guardsmen

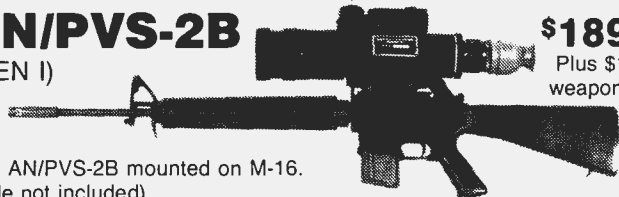
to buy their own weapons to train with and to defend themselves. Roughly 10% of the troops in my unit were "packin" their own concealed pieces during riot duty.

Name Withheld
Los Angeles, California

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AN/PVS-2B

(GEN I)



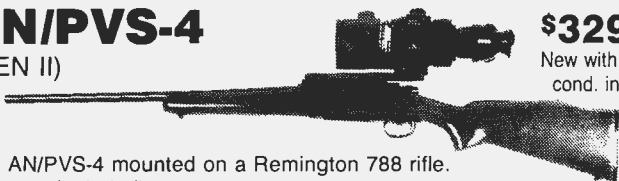
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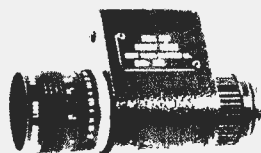


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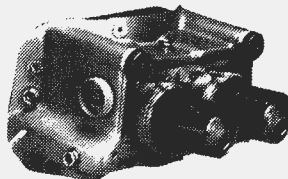


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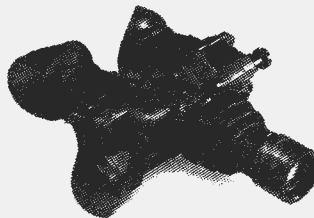
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The National Guard is probably the most politically cowardly arm of the U.S. military. Ever since the Kent State University riot in 1970 (where poorly led and inexperienced troops gunned down demonstrators, killing four) the Guard's leadership has been scared to death of civil disturbance duty. No National Guard officer is going to risk his career by having his troops kill a civilian without complete justification. The only politically safe situation for these toads to let their troops shoot back is to have a couple of dead guardsmen on the ground first. Sounds to us like the California Guard was just trying to increase the chance this would happen.

The personal weapons issue is tough. When you put on that uniform, you give up a lot of your rights. But we can sure understand a guardsman — perhaps a father, responsible for young children — going into a riot situation, knowing that he likely will not have live ammo, and being unwilling to risk his life and his children's future because of the cowardice of his leaders. No one should lose his basic right to self-defense because he is willing to fight for his country. A weapon without ammo is useless — worse than useless; it's easily stolen. The military should issue weapons with live ammo — or not at all.

MORE FLAK ABOUT H.R. 4897

After the negative response in your November '92 FLAK column from readers about whether cops should be allowed to carry concealed weapons nationally or not, I thought you should have at least one positive opinion from a peace officer.

Numerous officers I know have

used their weapons off-duty to protect people. When I carry off-duty I am no liability to the community; only criminals need worry.

Those in the law enforcement field, good cops that do their job, don't make many friends. There is more of a need for us to be armed than the average citizen, since we bump into past criminals every now and then that think their life would be greatly improved if we were blown off the face of this earth.

I hope you will support H.R. 4897. The only person who loses with this bill is the criminal.

N. Huckabay
Tehachapi, California

I would suggest that perhaps most people who want to carry a concealed weapon are already doing so in a very quiet way. As long as your weapon is invisible there are precious few risks of getting into trouble with the law. Should you ever have to use the weapon, you will probably run afoul of the law, with or without a carry permit.

Using the Second Amendment as a defense against illegal carrying is often unsuccessful. A more potent defense would be based on the First Amendment — the freedom of expression. It would be easier to prove that one has a strong conviction in favor of self-defense/self-preservation than to prove one's right to bear arms. Maybe the ACLU and even the press would jump on board behind this defense.

Cary D. Corbin
Hamburg, Pennsylvania

BOYCOTT SAA

As a black (African-American) former U.S. Marine, and a current 13-

year veteran law-enforcement officer, I found the article praising South African Airways ["The Great SOF Buffalo Caper," Nov. '92] to be an insult to black people the world over.

No, I'm not on a sensitivity kick, but I am appalled that a magazine I have purchased on a regular basis would cater to an air carrier that is part of the world's most bigoted regime since the Holocaust.

I have no doubt that the employees of SAA may be kindhearted people personally. This is not directed specifically against the airline, but what they represent.

Just as blacks boycotted bus travel during the days of American racial segregation, I believe that my fellow American citizens would not side with a firm that represents an extremist racist government that has shown itself to be the horror of an entire race. There are many of us that do not welcome SAA to the U.S.A., and justifiably so.

George Starkes
St. Petersburg, Florida

WAR ON DRUGS A SHAM

I just finished "Sometimes The Good Guys Lose." [Nov. '92] Sometimes? War On Drugs? Hell, there isn't even a damned fight. Drugs are everywhere and anyone can get them.

Someone in security at a federal installation told me, "We aren't interested in cocaine use unless it's occurring on federal property." Later, they explained that the dogs' noses weren't sensitive enough to detect the small quantities taken to work and, of course, there is the question of probable cause.

Why go to Colombia for a story about cocaine-dealing scum or lame law enforcement, when the real problem is right here?

Dr. Clay Shaeffer
Naples, Florida

JOIN THE NRA

Urge every SOF reader to join the National Rifle Association. HCI [Handgun Control Inc.] and the Brady Bunch are a pack of lying propagandists who manipulate the public for personal gain. They run a campaign of disinformation, blaming the Second Amendment for failures of the criminal justice system in the United States.

Don't sit idly by while our basic rights are stripped away bit by bit. As Benjamin Franklin said, "... those who give up some of their liberty in order to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

Anthony M. Smith
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania ✕



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WORLD SITREP

1

Kuwait

Ministry of Defense announces it will buy 236 M1A2 Abrams MBTs from United States and up to 300 Desert Warrior IFVs from Britain. Abrams was chosen over U.K. Challenger MBT, while Desert Warrior was picked rather than U.S. M2A2 Bradley IFV ...

2

Israel

Cycle of guerrilla rocket attacks on northern Israel, and Israeli retaliatory air strikes in southern Lebanon, comes to an abrupt end following Israeli decision to mass armor and self-propelled artillery for operations in Shi'ite areas of south Lebanon. Round of violence began with ambush of Israeli convoy by Iranian-backed *Hezbollah* guerrillas, resulting in five Israelis KIA ...

New 140mm APFSDS round is being developed by TAAS (the recently renamed Israel Military Industries) for use with a smoothbore tank gun expected to appear on new Mark 4 version of indigenously produced Merkava MBT. Germany, UK and France all have 140mm smoothbores under development, but no new tanks or upgrades using such a weapon have been approved ...

5

Thailand

U.N. closes third Cambodian refugee camp in country and marks repatriation of 150,000th refugee under repatriation program. Refugees are bused to Phnom Penh and then resettled in the village of their choice ...

10

Russia

In response to a 33% increase in crime rate, Russian citizens are arming themselves, mostly illegally, with tear-gas weapons and guns, causing President Boris Yeltsin to issue decree relaxing restrictions on some weapons, including hunting rifles for farmers and tear-gas guns and canisters for all citizens. Security ministry official reports that his U.S. counterparts have been telling him that allowing greater citizen-access to firearms is "a huge blunder" ...

6

Iran

First of possibly three Kilo-class submarines Iran purchased from Russia over U.S. objections reaches Gulf. Ship is expected to be based at Bandar Abbas. *USS Topeka*, a Los Angeles-class vessel, deployed to Gulf in early November, presumably to counter new threat ...

13

7

12

12

Iraq

Officials admit for first time that country's engineering design center was involved in development of gas centrifuges used in uranium enrichment, but still refuse to provide international inspectors with "procurement data" that would shed light on full extent of regime's nuclear weapons program. Meanwhile, U.N. inspection team melts special steel Iraq intended to use in production of centrifuges ...

11

Trinidad

Yasin-Abu Baker, Islamic militant who took over country's parliament in coup attempt that left 31 dead and 693 injured, is released from prison along with 112 of his followers. Abu Baker's release comes following a decision by British privy council in London upholding amnesty granted under duress to sect members at time of takeover ...

14

Peru

Apparent coup attempt against President Alberto Fujimori leads to arrest of 25 active and retired army officers, including Gen. Jose Valdivia, army's second in command, but some government critics maintain plot was really orchestrated by Fujimori to intimidate military. *Sendero Luminoso* guerrillas, meanwhile, resume attacks in countryside and threaten to kill anyone who goes to work ...

15

Jordan

In his most open break with Iraq, King Hussein calls on Iraqi people to rid themselves of Saddam Hussein. King's speech may be more noteworthy, however, for its Koranic and highly fatalistic tone, leading some to question success of cancer therapy he underwent in U.S. in September ...

3

Sri Lanka

In their own version of "ethnic cleansing," Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam guerrillas massacre 160 Moslems in eastern district of Polonnaruwa. Moslems have lived peacefully in Tamil areas of country for decades, but Tigers appear to have launched campaign to drive them out following decision by Moslem leaders to join government attempt to crush Tamil separatist movement ...

Tamil suicide commando assassinates Vice Admiral Clancy Fernando, commander of Sri Lankan navy, by pulling alongside his car on a motorcycle and igniting a bomb filled with iron pellets ...

4

Cambodia

Japan's 600-man combat engineer battalion completes its deployment in-country as part of U.N. peacekeeping mission, as fears mount that Khmer Rouge are planning a dry-season offensive. Khmer Rouge forces violated terms of 1991 cease-fire at least 25 times in October alone ...

8

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Preparations by multinational naval forces to impose sea blockade of Serbia coincide with signs that Serbs are preparing to resume hostilities with Croatia. Serb irregulars occupying parts of Croatia with ethnic Serb majorities refuse to disarm, while Serb-controlled Yugoslavian rump government threatens to send Yugoslav army into Bosnia-Herzegovina if Croats don't discontinue offensive in-country. More aggressive Serb posture may indicate Marxist Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic, and not U.S.-educated Prime Minister Milan Panic, is calling shots in Belgrade ...

7

Panama

Panamanian voters casting ballots in national referendum decisively reject proposal to abolish nation's army. Sixty-four percent vote no ...

10

El Salvador

President Alfredo Cristiani is said to agree to sacking more than 110 army officers for human rights violations during 12-year civil war. Purge of Salvadoran officer corps is part of accord with leftist FMLN rebels who were to start destroying their weapons on 1 December ...

13

16

Angola

Civil war between Jonas Savimbi's UNITA guerrillas and Angolan government appears to resume with heavy fighting in Luanda and countryside, following poor UNITA showing in elections that were supposed to end war. UNITA claims balloting was rigged, although international observers say it appeared to be relatively honest ...

9

Germany

Social Democrats, country's main opposition party, reverse long-standing opposition to deployment of German troops outside of NATO. Decision paves way for participation of German troops in U.N. peacekeeping forces and also possibly in international operations such as Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Social Democrats also come out in favor of ending Germany's liberal asylum rules that have been a focus of neo-Nazi violence ...

17

Lithuania

Voters' decision to return former communists to office as a result of economic failures of President Landsbergis' government ironically may help defuse possible confrontation with Russia over withdrawal of remaining Russian military units from country. Russian President Yeltsin suspended withdrawal until Lithuanians agree to guarantee rights of ethnic Russians living in Lithuania ...



BATTLE BLADES

Al Mar Warrior

by Greg Walker

Although the "Warrior" knife's basic concept was inspired by the martial philosophy of the late Michael Echanis, its development as a personal combat knife was pursued by Randy Wanner and Bob Taylor. Both men were close personal friends of Echanis; between them, they have compiled more than 50 years of street-lethal martial arts experience.

Even so, it was cutler Al Mar's far-flung manufacturing network and expertise that brought the Warrior into production. "We've been working on this project for a number of years," Mar related in one of his final *Soldier Of Fortune* interviews. "Until just recently, the Japanese were unable to properly grind the very difficult blade pattern offered in the knife's design."

Difficult indeed and one of the most expensive Al Mar Knives (AMK) projects to date, the Warrior has

seen four handmade prototypes and a handful of using knives produced by selected custom makers under the direction of Wanner. "Many of those asked simply turned the challenge down," Wanner said. "They were sincerely intimidated by the knife."

Vietnam veteran Taylor noted that nearly every maker who produced a Warrior prototype "never wanted to see the knife again." Wanner's specifications for the Warrior were explicit and not to be compromised.

Eager to see the Wanner-Taylor design as an AMK production knife, Mar evaluated the Warrior and explored avenues for its manufacture. Tooling was at first unavailable, then later prohibitive in cost. AMK bided its time, meeting with its Japanese manufacturers several times before a deal was

finally struck. "The Warrior never would have seen production if it weren't for Al Mar," Taylor commented at the 13th annual *SOF* Convention. "He [Mar] truly believed in the value of the design."

The Warrior's 7¼-inch blade is ground from select AM-6A stain-resistant steel, a material favored by AMK for its toughness and edge-holding

commend you try this at home).

A ¼-inch-thick guard of impressive proportions blocks the user's hand from sliding forward onto the vicious cutting edges. It is this feature that allowed Taylor to successfully destroy various tires without injury to himself. A slight rearward bend in both the upper and lower guard was added by AMK, a

design improvement to further secure the gripping hand in place.

"Al smoothed out the very minute design features of the Warrior, like those addressed in the guard," Wanner said.

Handle-wise, the Warrior features one of the most complex synthetic formats ever attempted on a production knife. Wanner's demand for a handle that could be replaced by the owner resulted in a textured black-nylon mold, featuring four wide finger grooves. Of a midrange durometer hardness, the grip is comfortably

"sticky" enough to provide secure adhesion with the hand while in use.

By removing a roll pin in the retaining pommel nut and unscrewing the same, the grip can be slid free of the full tang for replacement, should the grip be damaged. The handle's configuration and secure mounting prevents any slippage once the pommel nut and pin are locked down. No other knife we're aware of offers this leading-edge feature.

The pommel nut itself is formed from stainless steel and is six-sided. A ¼-inch-high circular skull-crusher tops off the pommel nut, with the entire assembly designed to facilitate striking/impact blows to the arms, wrists, hands, thighs and facial areas of an opponent. "Every aspect of the knife is geared toward personal combat. Re-



The Al Mar Warrior is a fierce close-combat knife; a natural choice for SpecOps personnel needing a consummate blend of form and function. Photo: Mike Dahlstrom

qualities. The primary edge offers a sweeping curve meant for intensive slashing, while the secondary, or upper, edge presents one of the fiercest combat-serration patterns ever applied to a production/custom knife.

With its ¼-inch blade thickness, the Warrior is meant to take severe abuse during the rigors of hand-to-hand combat. Its sturdy tip features a reinforced grind to prevent flexing/snapping and is also double-edged for immediate penetration.

At last year's *SOF* Convention, Taylor demonstrated the Warrior's point strength by driving one through a truck tire using only arm-strength — this was after the entire knife had been soaked in STP treatment/lubricant! No damage was sustained by either the knife or Taylor (*SOF* certainly does not rec-

member, the Warrior was developed by people who understood and practiced one of the most formidable of the martial arts," said Mar of the overall blade design.

AMK's current sheath is an all-leather affair with a single snap-'n'-strap securing system. It fits easily over the military pistol belt and hangs somewhat lower than conventional sheaths for both comfort and combative purposes. I recommend a Kydex sheath from the Cutlery Shoppe (1-800-231-1272) if enhanced wear and security concerns are priorities.

I enjoyed the opportunity of working with both Wanner and Taylor at the '92 SOF Convention. One of many combat knife seminars, theirs was sponsored by AMK and revolved around the Warrior. Through four arduous hours we used live blades, working out against lengths of plastic pipe and blade-tipped broomsticks thrust at us. It soon became obvious the AMK Warrior was both tough and deadly.

Using the Warrior's serrated edge, I could catch and drag my broomstick-

wielding opponent into me, reversing the knife and slashing crosswise at his face/throat. Hard blows with the Warrior's edge literally snapped the plastic pipe into short sections, with the wooden "spears" showing gross damage from both primary- and secondary-edge contact. The Warrior's handle design is wonderfully correct

ther a subdued or polished blade finish. Grips come in either black or woodland camouflage. As one of Mar's final projects before his passing, the Warrior is his most serious combat knife.

"It is not a handsome knife," Mar told me, "but its design is uncompromised and its purpose is pure. Wanner and Taylor put their hearts into this project,

beginning with the first handmade version nearly 15 years ago. I'm proud to see AMK producing it for both the combat-knife collector and those who are serious about their personal equipment."

To order a Warrior, contact AMK by phone at 503-635-9229, or write Al Mar Knives, Dept. SOF, 5755 S.W. Jean Road, Suite 101, Lake Oswego, OR 97035.

Although we who have admired Al Mar over the decades as a gentleman and purveyor of top-quality knives will

miss him, we are also very pleased to note that Al Mar Knives will continue in business. ☘

"Every aspect of the knife is geared toward personal combat. Remember, the Warrior was developed by people who understood and practiced one of the most formidable of the martial arts."

- Al Mar

with no slippage noted, despite sweaty palms, and despite blows delivered by Taylor meant to misdirect, if not disconnect, the blade from my hand.

The AMK Warrior is available in ei-

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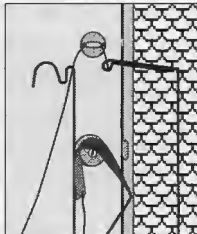
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"Wet Affairs" Weaponry

Text & Photo by Peter G. Kokalis

Sound-suppressed .22 caliber Long Rifle (LR) rimfire semiauto pistols rose to prominence during World War II. At the beginning of the war, clandestine OSS assassination teams were equipped with the Colt Woodsman, fitted with an off-center "can" that had a barrel extension in front of the suppressor housing, apparently so that a standard front-sight blade could be attached. Later on, a sound-suppressed version of the High Standard HD pistol was adopted by both the OSS and their British equivalents. Captain Francis Gary Powers was carrying one of these when his U-2 spy plane was shot down by the Soviets in 1960. It has been reported that the sound-suppressed High Standard HD was standard issue with the CIA until the early 1980s. But, why choose the pipsqueak .22 rimfire cartridge for such dangerous work, when larger and more effective calibers are available?

First of all, the .22 LR cartridge has relatively low muzzle blast. And, it's the muzzle blast to which all sound suppressors, successful or not, address themselves. They do so by use of a single formula from physics known as the general gas law. Applicable to all ideal gases, the equation states that pressure equals temperature multiplied by a constant divided by volume. As muzzle blast is a consequence of relatively high-pressure gases exiting the barrel, reduction of this pressure immediately before exit, by either increasing the volume or decreasing the temperature (cooling), or both, will reduce the sound-pressure level.

There are also a large variety of .22 LR semiauto pistols available, a substantial portion of which have compact and concealable lightweight envelopes. Almost all of these operate by means of unlocked blowback, with fixed barrels. This means we can hang a suppressor on the muzzle with no effect on the weapon's reliable operation.

Attaching a sound suppressor to many locked-breech, short-recoil-operated pistols places an added mass on the rearward-moving components that often requires the addition of a sophisticated recoil booster to insure positive functioning.

Finally, don't sell the .22 LR cartridge short (no pun intended). Outside of military and law-enforcement circles it has done, and continues to do, great execution, albeit not always swiftly.



Designed for clandestine "wet affairs" (a translation of the Russian term "*mokrie dela*") in amphibious special-warfare operations, the sophisticated Amphibian integrated .22 rimfire pistol/suppressor system will function with water in its environment cells, but is equally at home in a parched desert.

When fired from pistol-length barrels, .22 LR 36-grain lead hollow points will expand anywhere from .30 caliber up to .35 caliber and will penetrate more than 9 inches of soft tissue.

Caliber .22 LR, 40-grain roundnose lead projectiles will penetrate approximately 13.5 inches of soft tissue. Furthermore, these latter bullets almost always yaw some 180 degrees during their passage through tissue, ending their path traveling base-forward. Where the bullet yaw is at its maximum (60 to 120 degrees), the height of the wound track will increase to a half-inch (the length of the bullet) maximum and crush a wider area of tissue.

Nevertheless, the bullet that makes the biggest hole will do the most damage, providing we have the penetration required (a minimum of 12 inches in soft tissue). In this regard the .22 LR round remains marginal at best. However, for sentry removal and other clandestine operations, these weapons will be used up close with careful shot placement — preferably in the head.

Those sound suppressors acquired by civilians are employed for far more innocent tasks, i.e., informal target shooting without the need for hearing protection, and for that purpose the inexpensive .22 LR cartridge is ideal.

There are three sound-suppressor designers that have truly dominated the field in recent years. All are located in the United States. All have produced sound suppressors far ahead of their

competition, anyplace in the world. One has voluntarily dropped out of the picture. Another deals almost exclusively with government contracts. The third, AWC Systems Technology (Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 41938, Phoenix, AZ 85080-1938 — catalog free to Class 3 dealers and legitimate government agencies, \$5 to individuals), has designed and produces a wide array of state-of-the-art sound suppressor technology for federal agencies, military organizations and law-enforcement groups. Their products are also available to, and widely used by, qualified individuals.

The Colt Woodsman, great classic that it was, is long gone. High Standard went belly-up several years ago. However, since its introduction in 1982, the Ruger Mark II .22 pistol has been the envelope of choice of leading sound suppressor designers. It's inexpensive, reliable and blowback-operated with the barrel fixed to a tubular receiver in which the bolt group reciprocates.

AWC Systems Technology uses a corrosion-resistant, stainless-steel Ruger Mark II pistol as the launching pad for their remarkable "Amphibian" system. Developed for amphibious special-warfare operations, the Amphibian is touted to be the most advanced integrated .22-rimfire pistol/suppressor design available. It will function even with the suppressor tube partially filled with water. In fact, water in the suppressor's cells helps to cool the propellant gases and thus marginally reduce the sound-

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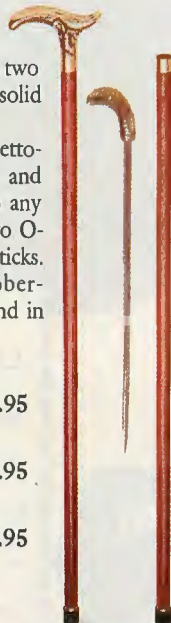


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pressure level. Ironically enough, the Russians used to refer to assassination assignments as "mokrie dela" (wet affairs). Be advised, however, that unlike AWC's Warp 3 (.22 LR), Warp 6 (9mm) and Nexus (.45) sound suppressors, the Amphibian system was not developed around the concept of constantly wet environment cells. The Amphibian was designed to be fired dry, and that's exactly how it was employed during our test and evaluation.

Constructed entirely of non-magnetic 304 stainless steel, the Amphibian suppressor contains no mesh packing or wipes. Radically different from conventional sound-suppressor systems, its proprietary baffle system creates an extremely efficient aerodynamic flow through the suppressor's environmental cells.

Prior to installation of the suppressor, the entire pistol is detail-stripped and tuned (trigger pull weight on our test specimen was a crisp and very light 2.5 pounds). A black-oxide finished blade-type front sight, 0.125-inch in width, is attached to the muzzle end of the suppressor housing to mate with the black-oxide, open square-notch (also 0.125-inch wide) rear sight, which is fully adjustable for both windage and elevation. Once the sound suppressor is installed on the pistol, the overall length of the weapon system is 13.7 inches (348mm), which is somewhat longer than competing types. The weight, with 10 rounds loaded in the magazine, is 43 ounces (1.2kg). The standard finish is optically flat matte. So precisely aligned flush to the receiver tube is the suppressor housing that only the most careful inspection reveals no more than the very faintest line between these two components.

Special barrel modifications permit the use of both standard- and high-velocity .22 LR ammunition, with bullet velocities held to subsonic levels. Hyper-velocity cartridges, such as the CCI Stinger and Remington Yellow Jacket, will cause an increase in the sound-pressure level with only an insignificant increase in wound-ballistics potential. In my opinion, hyper-velocity cartridge types should be avoided. Soldier Of Fortune's test specimen functioned reliably with Remington and Winchester High Velocity, Remington Pistol Match, Winchester T22 Standard Velocity and Federal Hi-Power 22s ammunition.

Sound suppressors are usually evaluated and compared by a logarithmic ratio called the decibel (db). The logarithmic nature of the db is important to keep in mind, as a 3 db drop in sound is 1/10 of the original, a 20 db decrease is 1/100 the original and a 30 db decrease is only 1/1000 of the original sound-pressure level. However, be-



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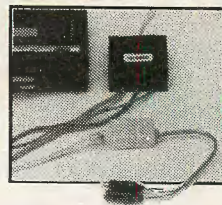
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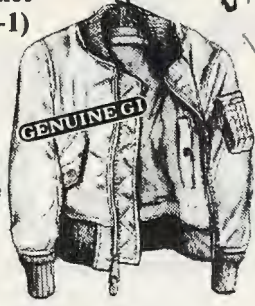
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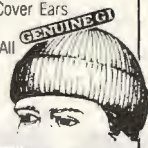
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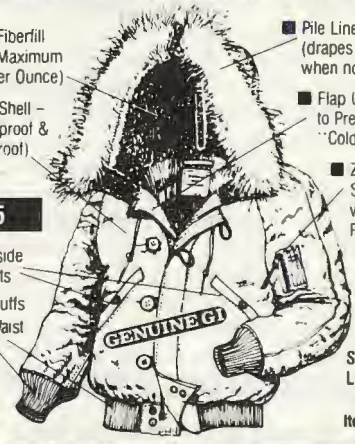
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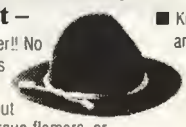


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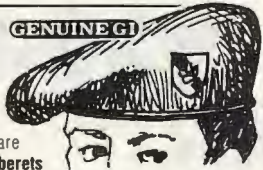
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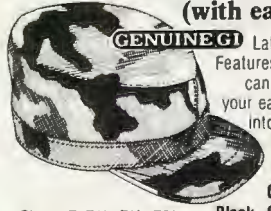
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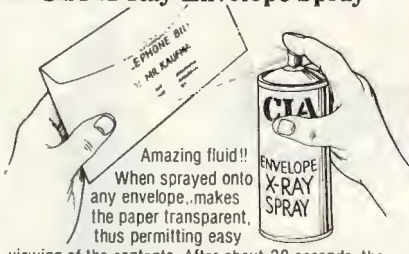
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ground with the introduction of three additions to their MiRAGE line of electronic reflex scopes: the Competitor 30mm, the Sportsman 1 and Ranger 1. But here's the real news: The Competitor and Sportsman models are available with a green- or red-dot option on command. A quick turn on the dial will change the LED from red to green, or back, with no change in zero.

For full details on the ADSCO MiRAGE line of scopes, contact them at Dept. SOF, One Wyman St., Woburn, MA 01801; phone: 617-935-1799 or fax: 617-932-4807.

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FIRE FLY SHOTGUN SIGHT

A new police combat-shotgun sight developed by former Deputy Sheriff Julio Santiago is now available. Called the Fire Fly, the sight is constructed of aircraft aluminum and mounts on either ventilated rib-type or plain barrels. Designed to give rifle-sight accuracy with the speed of a bead, the Fire Fly allows eyes-open shooting and super-fast target acquisition, especially in low-light conditions. For details, contact JAS Inc., Dept. SOF, Box O, Rosemont, MN 55068; phone: 612-890-7631.



ALS MiniAimer

The potential benefits of a laser sighting device are obvious, but the major drawback — especially on pistols — has been bulk, which creates problems, as about any place you'd hang a laser sight on a pistol, it'd be in the way. No more! Applied Laser Systems has introduced the "MiniAimer" advanced laser-sighting system, designed for use on a variety of popular handguns by Colt, S&W, Glock, Beretta, SIG-Sauer and Browning. The device is so compact that it mounts directly on the front of the trigger guard in such a fashion that it would be almost unnoticeable except to the rare

few who actually try to use a cutesy, recurved, front trigger guard. The MiniAimer is available in a rugged, holsterable Duty Version for law enforcement and a Standard Version for sporting or home defense uses.

Also new and eminently useful from ALS is the new Laser Boresighter, an advanced laser-sighting system that quickly and accurately bore-sights any firearm with a scope, laser aimer or with steel sights.

For further information, contact ALS, Dept. SOF, 2160 N.W. Vine St., Grants Pass, OR 97526; or phone: 503-476-5105.

NO SMOKING

Following are excerpts from former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's testimony before the U.S. Senate's Select Committee on POW/MIA Affairs, delivered on 22 Sept. 1992, as published in *The Wall Street Journal* on 30 Sept. 1992:

While I was in office, we did receive some reports alleging that live Americans were still in Indochina. I can assure the Committee that all those reports were taken seriously. But no confirmed report of living American prisoners ever crossed my desk. At the time, returning prisoners stated that they believed all POWs had been released.

The Committee ... owes the American people a statement of the simple truth: Some prisoners *may* — I repeat *may* — have been kept behind by our adversaries in violation of solemn commitments.

No prisoners were left behind by the deliberate act or negligent omission of American officials ...

When the administration in which I served came into office, it found half-a-million Americans fighting in a region far removed from the U.S. ... We began negotiating in 1969, continuing a process begun in the previous administration which, however, had never gone beyond procedural discussions. One of the highest priority demands, which we consistently declared to be non-negotiable, was the release of all prisoners throughout Indochina, and a full accounting for the missing.

During four anguishing years we negotiated to find honorable terms for ending the war, first sporadically on weekends, later in week-long, day-and-night sessions. For not withdrawing more unconditionally, we were harassed by protesters, attacked in the

Smiles, handshakes, frustration — Henry Kissinger meets with Hanoi's chief negotiator Le Duc Tho in Paris suburb, June 1973. Photo: AP/Wide World



media, criticized in countless congressional resolutions and ridiculed for our concept of national honor.

Never once did we receive any criticism from *any* source of the kind now emerging from this inquiry. The pressures we experienced were in the other direction — that we were not making enough concessions, that we should withdraw unilaterally in the expectation that then prisoners would be released by an act of grace of their captors ...

During this period, many political leaders, including Senator George McGovern, the Democratic presidential candidate, and 30 U.S. Senators, were calling for the unconditional unilateral withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam, without any formal North Vietnamese commitment for the concurrent or even subsequent return of our MIAs and POWs or accounting for the missing in action ...

Forgotten Efforts

The last known POWs were released on March 28 [1973]. Those who leaked that President Nixon or his advisers, in announcing that all prisoners had been released, knew that we were keeping prisoners behind, disingenuously neglected to mention President Nixon's statement that "there are still some problem areas. The provision of the agreement requiring an accounting for all missing in action in Indochina ... [has] not been complied with ... " That is *all* we knew, and nothing has been produced or can be produced to indicate the contrary.

Every U.S. official was dissatisfied with the lack of information about our MIAs in Laos, and we said so publicly. Our dissatisfaction was based on evidence that many of these men, mostly pilots who had been shot down, had reached the ground alive, but they were never returned to us alive or declared to have died. We also noted that, statistically, the percentage of the missing accounted for in Laos was far smaller than in Vietnam.

I used these figures in my February talks in Hanoi.

But we did not have evidence that any of the missing were actually still alive and being held prisoner. We repeatedly and insistently demanded that North Vietnam provide a better accounting for the missing. We did so both before and after Secretary Richardson's March 28 memorandum to me, which has been featured in these hearings. Hanoi ignored our demands. Between February 1973 and June 1975, we raised our dissatisfaction with accounting for MIAs in Laos more than 60 times with officials of the Laotian government.

It is the ultimate irony that our Herculean efforts to get an accounting in 1973 should be twisted 20 years later into "evidence" that we knew POWs had been left behind.

There is, as well, the question of what more we could have done. During this period, as I have reported in detail in my memoirs, I favored military retaliation against Hanoi's repeated violations. The president felt that on balance it was better to have one more negotiating round. Certainly there was little political

GUNS



Combat assault from a Huey near Bong Son in 1969 — members of B Company, 1st Battalion, 50th Infantry (Mechanized) of the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade move out to set up a perimeter. Are these men accounted for? Photo: DoD

support in the U.S. for stronger measures. Most commentators, congressional and media, opposed any effort to stand up to Hanoi, arguing that the U.S. had no right to retaliate at all against the North's blatant violations ...

A *New York Times* editorial of April 1, 1973, stated that "the president continues to imply in dark and guarded language that he is ready to use the power of the United States to force adherence

were overwhelming. In blatant contravention of the January agreement, they had moved an entire army, some 35,000 fresh troops, 400 tanks, 300 artillery pieces, 7,000 trucks and 27,000 tons of military supplies into South Vietnam. On April 19, we suspended meetings of the Joint Economic Commission. The next day, the U.S. government issued a detailed public statement listing all the North's violations and specifically criticizing their failure

KISSINGER TESTIMONY REBUKES POW CONSPIRACIES

to the cease-fire terms. Nowhere in the official records of the truce is there provision for any one nation to deal with violations by its own bilateral actions."

The Des Moines Register said on April 4 that "it would be a grave mistake for the United States to decide the peace violations by the other side were intolerable and jump back into combat again ... The agreement calls for the United States to get out and stay out and leave the Vietnamese to settle the future of Vietnam."

Nor did the Congress offer [the] support needed to resist Hanoi's violations ...

By the middle of April, Hanoi's violations of the Paris Accords

to provide information on U.S. MIAs ...

Between mid-May and June 1973, I conducted 12 days of talks with the North Vietnamese. I reviewed in detail the North's violations, including the failure to account for all the MIAs, and pressed the North Vietnamese repeatedly for a better accounting of U.S. personnel missing in Laos. But Hanoi sensed our leverage was rapidly eroding, partly as a result of actions taken by the Congress. For example: On May 10, the House adopted an amendment which prohibited the use of funds for military activity

Continued on page 68

AFRIKAANS AK

by Peter G. Kokalis

Like it or not, the 5.56x45mm cartridge and the millions of infantry rifles chambered for it are going to be with us for a long, long time to come.

The Evil Empire has collapsed. The perceived threat has diminished to such an extent that armed forces throughout the world are faced with budget cuts of unprecedented scale. The U.S. Army has abandoned the Advanced Combat Rifle (ACR) program. Staring at thousands of crates of unissued Kalashnikovs, a once-again united Germany has lost its interest in Heckler & Koch's G11 rifle and its caseless ammunition.

Rifles chambered for the 5.56x45mm NATO round predominate in the West and among NATO client states. More or less equivalent in performance, the 5.45x39mm cartridge and the AK-74 rifle are now standard in the armed forces of the former Soviet Union. While there are still almost 50 million caliber 7.62x39mm Kalashnikovs spread out over the planet in one cache or another, infantry rifles chambered for standard-size .30 caliber cartridges such as 7.62x51mm NATO or .30-06 will never again be fielded on the battlefield in anything other than auxiliary roles.

Only three modern assault rifles have been tested and proven worthy in the arena of the battlefield: the M16 series, the Kalashnikov and the R4/Galil. South Africa's R4 and Israel's Galil are nothing more, or less, than caliber 5.56x45mm NATO, highly modified variants of the third model AK-47. Early Israeli Galils were, in fact, fabricated by IMI (Israel Military Industries) using Finnish Valmet M62 receivers with barrels machined from Colt M16 barrel blanks. An altered Stoner 63 magazine was incorporated, along with an FN FAL-type side-folding stock.

When the South African Defense Force (SADF) adopted the R4 (a product-improved Galil) more than a decade ago as their standard-issue service rifle, they selected a weapon more than sufficiently bloodied by Israel's many wars of survival. Rugged, reliable and considerably more accurate than the caliber 7.62x39mm Kalashnikov series, the R4 can be faulted only by virtue of its somewhat excessive weight. Yet the South Africans managed to substantially improve what was an already excellent rifle.

South African R4 rifles do not employ the pinned-and-riveted, stamped sheet-metal receiver of the AKM series. Their receivers are manufactured from a heavy milled forging. In addition, they do not utilize the usual Kalashnikov barrel-extension unit for lockup of the bolt. The bolt lugs lock into recesses milled into the receiver body itself. All of this is supposed to provide a more substantial heat sink to disperse heat more rapidly and reduce the possibility of a cook-off when the weapon is employed in the squad automatic role.

Method Of Operation

The R4's method of operation remains identical to the Kalashnikov's. It fires from the closed-bolt position and is gas-operated without an adjustable regulator.

When the trigger is pulled, the hammer drives the firing pin forward to ignite the primer. After ignition of the primer, a portion of the propellant gases migrates into the 1.8mm-diameter



vent, tapped at a 30-degree angle to the gas block which is pinned to the barrel. The gas enters the cylinder (to which a small spring has been attached to secure its retention during reassembly) and drives the piston rearward.

The piston is hard-chrome-plated for ease of maintenance. It is also notched to provide a reduced bearing surface and permit excess gas blow-by. The bolt carrier is permanently attached to the piston. After a short amount of free travel, during which time the gas pressure drops to a safe level, the cam slot engages the bolt's cam pin and the bolt is rotated and unlocked as the carrier moves rearward.

Primary extraction occurs as the bolt is rotated, and thus a massive Kalashnikov-type extractor claw is not required. Empty-case ejection is typically violent. The cases are severely dented by the ejector and thrown to the right and front by as much as 40 feet. At this time, the recoil spring is compressed and its return energy drives the carrier forward to strip a round from the magazine and chamber it.

The Galil uses only one spring for both the trigger and hammer. The R4 rifle has two separate springs for these components. They are made of multi-strand cable for strength and durability. Unlike that of the Galil, the R4 trigger has two holes for the spring to hook into. The trigger and sear springs are conventional coil types.

To inhibit breakage, the R4 trigger sear has a wider tail than that of the Galil. Like other Kalashnikov-system rifles, the trigger

South African R4 Series — Leading-Edge Kalashnicopy



Sgt. Zulu of 115 SAI Battalion fires his issue R4 rifle equipped with the lightweight, 35-round synthetic magazine. The R4 scores high marks in both hit probability and target acquisition when employed by experienced and properly trained operators. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

mechanism is that first used in the U.S. M1 Garand rifle.

The R4's right-side selector lever is the same stamped sheet-metal bar common to all Kalashnikov-type rifles. It is objectionably noisy when manipulated, unless carefully bent away from the receiver notches by an experienced armorer. The top position ("S") is safe, where the trigger is blocked and the bolt can be retracted only far enough to inspect for a chambered round. The center position ("A") will produce full-auto fire. The bottom position ("R") will provide semi-automatic fire. There is also a smaller selector lever on the left side, intended to be manipulated by the thumb of the firing hand.

Two sears control the firing mechanism, the trigger sear and an auto-safety sear. In full-auto fire, the trigger sear is held back and only the first round of the burst is fired off this rear sear. Subsequently, the bolt carrier moves rearward and rolls the hammer over. The auto-safety sear continues to hold the hammer back until the bolt carrier is fully forward again, at which time it trips the auto-safety sear and the hammer rotates to fire another round. Thus, after the first round the trigger sear is deactivated entirely from control on the hammer. Releasing the trigger will catch the hammer on the trigger sear once more. In

The R8 carbine has a 15.6-inch barrel. It has no bipod, but its barrel has been fitted with a steel bushing to accept the South African R1 (FN FAL) tubular bayonet. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis



semiautomatic fire, no pressure is placed on the trigger sear, which is free to catch the hammer each time it is rolled back by the bolt carrier.

Like all Kalashnikovs, the Israeli Galil is not fitted with a spring-loaded firing pin. If the cartridge primers are just slightly too sensitive, the danger of a slam-fire, or premature ignition, is a real possibility. Because of the firing pin's unchecked forward momentum, and because after several thousand rounds its retaining pin initiated a burr on the notched side of the pin, the South



The R7 is the heavy-barrel, squad-automatic version of the R4 series. It weighs 11.2 pounds, empty, and is equipped with a bipod and Galil-type carrying handle. Photo: Peter G. Kokalis

Africans began to experience occasional so-called "ghost shots."

Firing pin redesign efforts at LIW (Lyttelton Ingenieurswerke, Dept. SOF, 368 Selborne Ave., Lyttelton, P.O. Box 7710, Pretoria 0001, Republic of South Africa; phone: 27-12-620-2103; fax: 27-12-620-2407), where the R4 rifle is produced, centered around four requirements. First, the firing pin had to be retained in a rearward position until breech locking was completed. Second, the firing pin had to be prevented from slamming against its retaining pin. Third, the firing pin needed adaptation to prevent misfires ("light hits") without losing additional hammer energy. And finally, the solution had to be a retrofit, not a totally new bolt design.

Firing pin springs were added, but they failed to solve the burring problem. Altering the cam action was attempted and this also proved to be an unsatisfactory answer.

The final solution was ingenious and simple. A recess was milled into the tail of the bolt and a small hole drilled at the end of the firing pin, through which a pin was installed that retains both a synthetic bushing and a steel flat washer. Since it presses against the bolt recess, the bushing is pre-loaded and holds the firing pin rearward. When the hammer hits the

Unusual factory cutaway of the R4. Photo: courtesy LIW



firing pin, the bushing collapses into the firing pin's fluted areas and the firing pin moves forward to strike the primer. It was eventually discovered that a completely fluted firing pin was unnecessary; R4 firing pins are now only partially fluted (to permit propellant gases to blow away debris).

Magazines, Bipods & Pistol Grips

Galil 35-round magazines are sturdy and far more reliable than M16 magazines, but, as they are fabricated with seven steel components, far too heavy. LIW designed a synthetic 35-round magazine for the R4 which was adopted by the SADF about five years ago. Lighter and cheaper than steel magazines, original specifications called for a disposable unit, but the magazine proved to be so durable that this requirement was abandoned. Tests indicate an endurance life of more than 20,000 rounds.

Containing only four components (a steel follower spring and nylon follower, floorplate and body), the body is a one-piece injection molding. The follower ends are closed to inhibit the accumulation of debris. Using international symbols, the month and year of production appear on the magazine body. Production rate is one body per minute, per mold, at 50% the cost of a steel magazine. It will eventually replace all steel magazines in the SADF, including the less than reliable 50-round magazine.

More durable than steel, and just as reliable, this nylon magazine can absorb tremendous shock without damage. Its strength and drop tests surpass steel and, of course, it's not susceptible to

Ultra-short R6 carbine. To reduce the envelope to minimum possible dimensions, the gas block was moved rearward as far as possible and both the piston and gas tube shortened. Photo: courtesy LIW



corrosion. Impervious to all commonly encountered cleaning fluids, LIW's magazine has successfully passed accelerated ultraviolet tests (five years of exposure lying on a steel plate on LIW's roof) with only slight discoloration. Cold weather tests have been conducted without failure of any kind.

LIW's nylon magazine will permit troops to increase their ammunition load and should appeal to all armies fielding the Galil series of rifles.

More Magazine Info

The all-steel 50-round magazine is still encountered in the SADF and remains popular with the troops — especially those operating from Armored Fighting Vehicles (AFVs) — as it presumably provides more "firepower," whatever that means. It is not reliable. In my experience, staggered-column rifle and submachine gun magazines of a capacity greater than about 36 rounds are invariably equipped with follower springs that provide either too much stripping pressure when the magazine is fully loaded (this will drop the bolt's forward velocity and produce light hits on the primer) or not enough stripping pressure when only a few rounds remain (this will induce "bolt-over-base" feeding stoppages). Furthermore, it is almost impossible to fire from the prone position when extended-capacity magazines are employed.

A 12-round magazine, color-coded with white stripes is available, blocked to accept only crimped ballistite (blank) cartridges for launching rifle grenades. Another special-purpose magazine is that provided with an insert to accept .22 LR cartridges for a rimfire conversion kit, intended to reduce the cost of training.

The R4's magazine catch/release latch is of the flapper type, similar to the Kalashnikov. The front of the trigger guard serves as a shroud to protect the latch from accidental release of the magazine. Loaded magazines must be inserted by engaging a projection on the magazine's front into a recess at the front of the magazine-well, then rotating the magazine back to lock into the spring-loaded catch/release.

One especially useful accessory issued with the R4 is the sturdy, rigid bipod attached to the gas block. It can be used as a wire cutter and to open beer bottles as well.

Some believe that bipods on infantry rifles adversely affect accuracy potential. If attached (like those for the M16) directly to the barrel, it's possible that a bipod might disturb the barrel's harmonics. However, the R4 bipod is not attached to the barrel. More important, at long ranges the point of impact might be slightly altered by the use of a bipod, but the vast majority of enemy contacts occur at distances of 100 meters or less, and at that range no change in the point of impact can be detected. When firing from the prone position under stress, the use of a bipod as a firing platform will only increase hit probability.

The R4's buttstock has been lengthened and is fabricated from reinforced synthetic material, instead of the aluminum tubing found on the Galil. The butt-joint was also redesigned and a polyurethane buffer was added. The Galil ARM's wooden handguards have been replaced by a similar synthetic compound. In both instances the strength and durability of these components have been significantly enhanced.

The Galil's synthetic pistol grip has been retained and it is one of the very best ever put on an assault rifle. It is more than just reminiscent of that encountered on the Hungarian AKM/ADM-65 series. Of more than adequate length, with a well-defined bottom flare to prevent the hand from slipping, the pistol grip has been mounted to the receiver at an excellent grip-angle.

No less than 15 of the R4's components are investment castings produced by Telcast Engineering Works (Pty.) Ltd., a South African company that specializes in sand and gravity die-casting, precision forging, and investment and vacuum casting. When properly utilized, investment-cast parts are more cost-effective

and less labor-intensive than traditional milled forgings.

There are a number of other small, but important, differences between the South African R4 and the Israeli Galil. The rifle-grenade retaining spring on the R4 has been modified to inhibit fouling and now lies completely within the barrel groove. There is a shoulder on front of the R4's gas tube to prevent the handguard disassembly lever from moving forward during firing (In addition, the handguard holder was altered to prevent incorrect installation of the handguard, while the handguard locking lever was chamfered and is now easier to rotate past the gas block.). The Galil's carrying handle has been removed.

The R4's bolt-retracting handle has a machined configuration. It is not bent over as is the Galil's. Both are upright to allow cocking with either hand — a useful feature. The last East German Kalashnikovs to be produced featured turned-up cocking handles, undoubtedly to provide this ability.

For cost-effective purposes, the R4's recoil-spring retaining ring can be installed in only one orientation. The rear end of the Galil's recoil-spring guide rod, which serves as a retainer for the sheet-metal receiver cover, is somewhat extended (from that of the AK-47/AKM) to ease disassembly and to lock the cover more securely to the receiver body. This projection on the end of the

guide rod was extended even further on the R4 to prevent the receiver cover from coming off when firing grenades. The guide rod tube was also lengthened for the same reason.

This added rigidity is also important, as the rear sight is mounted on the receiver cover. While

no less secure than its attachment to the gas cylinder on the Finnish Valmet M71, it does not provide the rigidity offered by the gas-block-mounted rear sights of the other rifles in the Kalashnikov series. The trade-off is a longer sight radius.

Sight Solutions

The rear sight is a flip-up, peep type with 300- and 500-meter apertures. The post-type front sight (somewhat thinner than that of the Galil) can be adjusted for elevation and windage zero. Adjustments are by means of a tool usually issued only to cadre. Windage adjustment is achieved by loosening and tightening two opposing screws which move the entire front-sight assembly in its dovetail on top of the gas block. The diameter of the front sight hood (increased over that of the Galil) is such that it forms an additional aiming circle just within the rear aperture to further assist sight alignment and speed target acquisition.

The R4 is equipped with encapsulated tritium night sights set for target engagement at 200 meters. To use at dusk or night, the front tritium-sight assembly is folded up to expose a vertical bar, which is aligned between two rear luminous dots also mounted on a hinged assembly in front of the rear sight. When the rear tritium sight is flipped up for use, the rear peep sights must be placed in an offset position midway between the two apertures.

The dovetail for a scope side-mount, found on the left side of the Galil's receiver, has been omitted on the R4. Correctly so, in my opinion, as optical sights belong on dedicated military sniper rifles only. Even relatively low-power scopes serve only to restrict the soldier's field of view and retard the acquisition of moving targets at the close ranges where combat mostly occurs.

Other changes: white dots instead of bars on the receiver below "SAR" on the left-hand selector. In the British Commonwealth manner, the serial number is on the R4's barrel instead of the receiver. The height of the bullet guide behind the chamber was increased. Some holes were removed from the gas block.

Finally, the Galil has a conventional baked-enamel finish over

R4 RIFLE SERIES SPECIFICATIONS

Caliber:	5.56x45mm NATO.
Operation:	Locked breech with rotary bolt; gas-operated (except for slide-action Vektor H5); selective-fire capability (except for Vektor H5, LM4 and LM5); fires from the closed-bolt position.
Feed:	35-round synthetic, 12-round ballistite and 35- and 50-round steel, detachable staggered-column, two-position-feed, box-type magazines. 5- and 12-round magazines for Vektor H5.
Weight, empty:	R4: 9.4 pounds; R5: 8 pounds; R6: 8.1 pounds; R7: 11.2 pounds; R8: 8.3 pounds; Vektor H5: 10 pounds (complete with scope).
Length:	Stock folded — R4: 30.8 inches; R5: 24.5 inches. Vektor H5, overall: 43.2 inches.
Barrel:	Six-groove with a right-hand twist of one turn in 12 inches for the M193-type ball projectile.
Barrel length:	R4/LM4: 18.4 inches; R5/LM5: 13.3 inches; R6: 11.4 inches; R7: 20.3 inches; R8: 15.6 inches; Vektor H5: 22.4 inches.
Sights:	Flip-up, peep-type rear sight with 300- and 500-meter apertures; post-type front sight with protective hood can be adjusted for both windage and elevation zero. Also equipped with flip-up, encapsulated-tritium night sights; Vektor H5 issued with 4x32mm wide-angle optical sight.
Finish:	Molybdenum paint of the dry-film lubricant type — extremely tough and both corrosion-resistant and high-temperature-resistant — baked over the exterior of steel components.
Manufacturer:	LIW — Dept. SOF, 368 Selborne Ave., Lyttelton, P.O. Box 7710, Pretoria 0001, Republic of South Africa; phone: 27-12-620-2103; fax: 27-12-620-2407.
T&E summary:	High accuracy potential. Heavy. Felt recoil virtually non-existent. Very little muzzle rise when burst-fire is limited to 2 or 3 shots. Excellent hit probability and rapid target acquisition when employed by experienced and properly trained operators. Designed with the assistance of highly experienced end users. Extremely well-executed.



phosphate. A molybdenum paint of the dry-film lubricant type, which is extremely tough and both corrosion- and high-temperature-resistant, has been baked over the exterior of the R4's steel components.

All of which merely demonstrates that even the best weapons systems can be improved when exposed to some forced ingenuity and that most ultimate of all test beds — combat.

There are presently no less than eight variants in the R4 series. All have six-groove barrels with right-hand twists of one turn in 12 inches for the M193-type ball projectile. The SADF is currently evaluating the prospect of converting to Belgian SS109-type (U.S. M855) ball ammunition, which will require a faster twist (at least 1:9 inches). The R4, as described above, has a

barrel length of 18.4 inches and weighs 9.4 pounds, empty. Next to be fielded was the R5, which is in service with the South African air force and marines. More or less equivalent to the Israeli SAR, the R5 has a barrel length of 13.3 inches, weighs about 8 pounds and has no bipod. The cyclic rate of both of these weapons in the full-auto mode ranges from 600 to 700 rpm.

The R8 is, in essence, an R5 with a longer barrel (15.6 inches). Like the R5, it has no bipod. It weighs 8.3 pounds, empty. Its barrel has been fitted with a steel bushing to accept the South African R1 (FN FAL) tubular bayonet. This bushing can be attached to all rifles in the R4 series, except the R6 and R7.

Weighing 8.1 pounds, empty, the R6 is an ultra-short carbine featuring a barrel length of only 11.4 inches. This drops the muzzle velocity to only 2,700 fps. The gas block was moved rearward as far as possible and both the piston and gas tube were shortened.

From Variety to Vektor

The R6 barrel's gas port diameter is that of the R5. The cyclic rate is only 585 rpm. When the muzzle is placed close to the gas block, the time/pressure curve is shortened and there is less gas available to drive the reciprocating parts rearward. As a consequence, chopping the barrel of a gas-operated machine gun will invariably lower the cyclic rate. The R6 has a birdcage-type flash suppressor with three vertical slots on its top and none on the bottom (to prevent dust from kicking up when firing in the prone position). Nevertheless, the flash signatures of both the R5 and R6 are objectionable, in my opinion. An even-more-compact bullpup configuration is under development at LIW.

The R7 is a heavy-barrel version with a barrel length of 20.3 inches. This version weighs 11.2 pounds, empty. It is equipped with a bipod and a Galil-type carrying handle. To accommodate the heavy barrel, a new gas block was designed. There is no bayonet lug. Its flash suppressor has two longitudinal slots on top, offset slightly to the left, and eight holes around the circumference, drilled at an angle away from the operator (to direct unburnt propellant granules forward, not to control muzzle jump).

The LM4 and LM5 are semiautomatic-only versions of the R4 and R5, respectively. They have different selector levers and sears from the selective-fire models. A special version of the LM4, without a receiver cut for the auto-safety sear (and not easily convertible to full-auto) has been manufactured for sale to collectors and shooters in Switzerland. Unfortunately, the South African government would not permit LIW to market the LM4/LM5 to civilians in South Africa.

This resulted in the most unusual transmutation of an infantry rifle in the history of military small arms. LIW has managed to successfully turn the gas-operated, selective-fire R4 into a slide-action rifle called the Vektor H5. Vektor is the new military small-arms and commercial division of LIW.

Vektor Vanguard

The Vektor H5's receiver body remains basically the same as that of the R4. The trigger mechanism, sear and bolt are those of the R4. A manual safety has been installed in front of the trigger that blocks both the sear and the trigger. The top part of the bolt carrier has been cut off, and the piston and all gas components removed. A steel block has been added to the receiver to retain the redesigned receiver cover, which is held to this block by an allen-head screw. So that a scope might be securely mounted, the receiver cover has been manufactured from much thicker steel than the sheet-metal cover of the R4.

There is a stud on the top of the bolt carrier which mates with the action arm. A steel tube over the rear end of the barrel contains the action spring which keeps the bolt forward in the locked deposition. A projection at the rear end of the carrier prevents the hammer from striking the firing pin if the action is partially unlocked.

The walnut forearm surrounds an aluminum tube, to which is attached the spring-steel action arm by means of two rivets. This assembly is glued to the forearm. The walnut, thumbhole buttstock



R4 demonstrates its exceptional reliability during the mud portion of environmental testing. Photo: courtesy LIW



Without doubt the most unusual transmutation of an infantry rifle in the history of military small arms, the Vektor H5 is a commercial, slide-action version of the gas-operated, selective-fire R4. Photo: courtesy LIW

has a rubber buttpad and a long swivel on its bottom. Both buttstock and forearm are made by Musgrave. The front sling swivel (an FN FAL type) rides in a groove on the barrel in front of the forearm.

The Vektor H5's magazine catch/release is the same as that of the R4. Two magazines are available — a flush-mounted five-round magazine, and one of 12-round capacity that has been modified from the military ballistic magazine.

There is no flash hider nor are there any iron sights on the Vektor H5. A 4x32mm wide-angle scope, complete with ring mounts, is included as standard issue. The reticle pattern is that of conventional cross hairs in the center and thick bars on the sides and top and bottom.

Overall length of the Vektor H5 is 43.2 inches, with a 22.4-inch barrel that has the same rifling-and-twist specifications of the entire R4 series. The weight of this rifle, empty, is a hefty 10 pounds. The standard R4 folding stock and pistol grip can be installed.

As there is no action-release lever, to clear the chamber you must first remove the magazine and then jack the forearm to drive the bolt rearward (the breech is held in the locked position by only the action spring).

I spent a full day test-firing all rifles in the R4 series in the training area (covering more than 45,000 acres) of 115 South African Infantry Battalion, at Murrayhill outside of Pretoria. I have previously, over the period of a decade, fired many thousands of rounds through R4/Galil rifles. They are, by the standards of many, heavy. Partially as a consequence of this, their accuracy potentials are quite high — certainly far beyond the capabilities of other Kalashnikov-type rifles. They also score high marks in both hit probability and target acquisition, when employed by experienced and properly trained operators.

Felt recoil is virtually nonexistent with any rifle in the R4 series, even those with very short barrel lengths. Muzzle rise is barely perceptible if the operator exercises correct fire discipline and fires only two- or three-shot bursts. The cyclic rates of all the selective-fire versions are within reasonable ranges.

Like all LIW products I have encountered, the rifles of the R4 series and their accessories were designed with the assistance of experienced combat-user input (the SADF) and are extremely well-executed. All of the selective-fire versions of the R4 series remain fine examples of the qualities one should look for in a modern infantry rifle.

Wound Ballistics

A great deal of misinformation has been published about the reasons for the effectiveness of the M193 5.56x45mm cartridge for which these rifles are chambered. The large permanent cavity produced by the 55-grain, boat-tailed M193 bullet is primarily a consequence of bullet fragmentation. As long as this FMJ (Full Metal Jacket) bullet travels point-forward, its wound track remains small and there is little tissue damage.

However, after from 2 to 6 inches of penetration, the M193 projectile will yaw to 90 degrees, flatten and break apart at the cannellure (crimping groove). The bullet point remains as a flattened triangular section, retaining about 60% of the original bullet weight and penetrating about 13 inches in soft tissue. That portion to the rear of the cannellure breaks into numerous fragments that penetrate up to 3 inches radially away from the main wound track (unlike those of most fragmenting handgun projectiles, which tend to remain close to the permanent cavity). These multiple fragments perforate and weaken tissue.

Tissue between two perforations is often completely detached when subsequently subjected to the sudden stretch of temporary cavitation. Weakened tissue may be split by stretch that would otherwise be absorbed by the tissue's elasticity. There is a direct correlation between the bullet's velocity and the fragmentation pattern. At a range of 100 yards, the M193 projectile generally breaks into two large fragments. At ranges of more than 200 yards, the bullet flattens somewhat and only a few small fragments squeeze out of the base. If this bullet passes through an arm or leg without striking bone before it yaws and fragments, the damage will be minimal.

There has been a great deal of speculation concerning the effectiveness of the U.S. M855 (similar to the Belgian SS109)

Continued on page 64

ALONG BOSNIA'S HO CHI MINH TRAIL

American SF Vet Advises Moslem Freedom Fighters

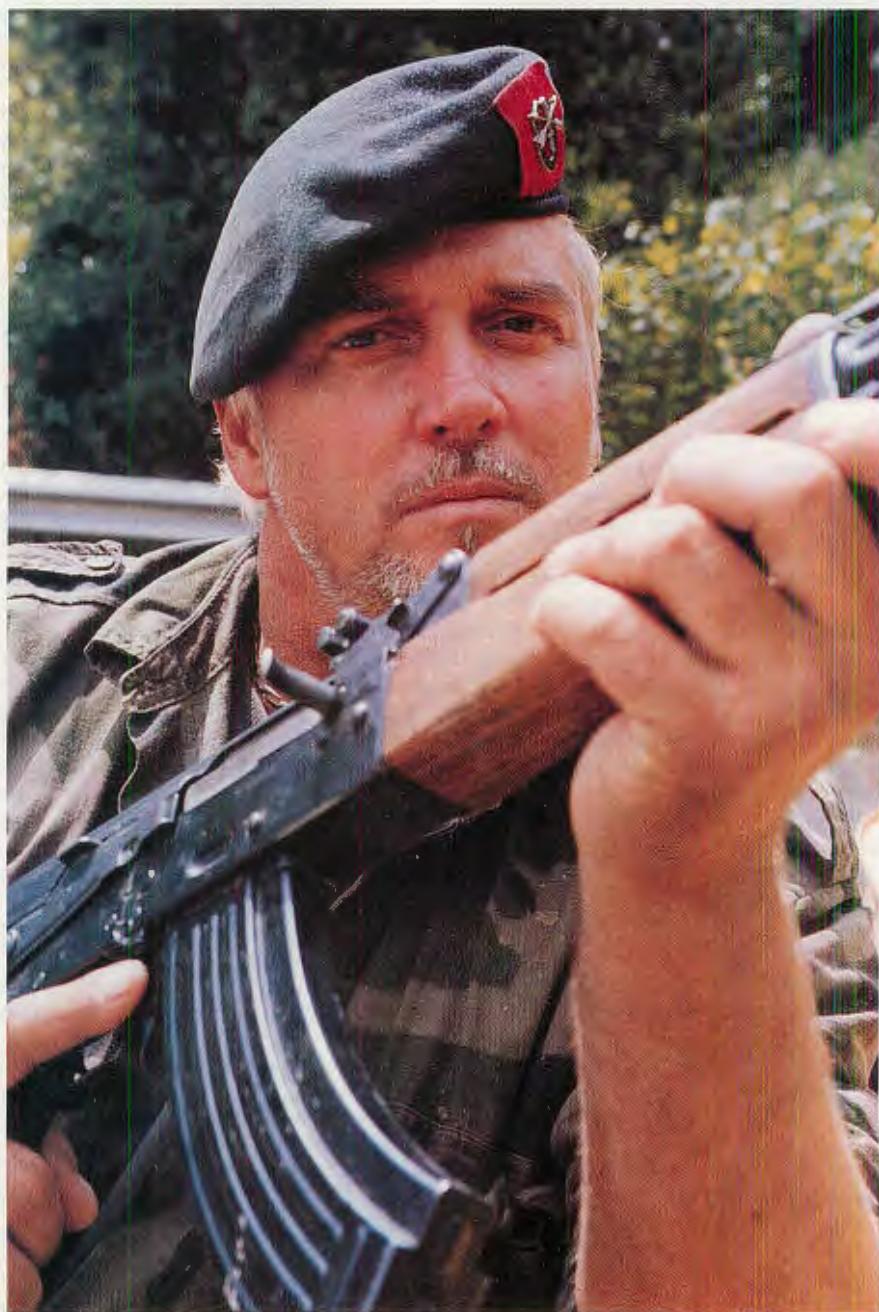
Text & Photos by Peter Douglas

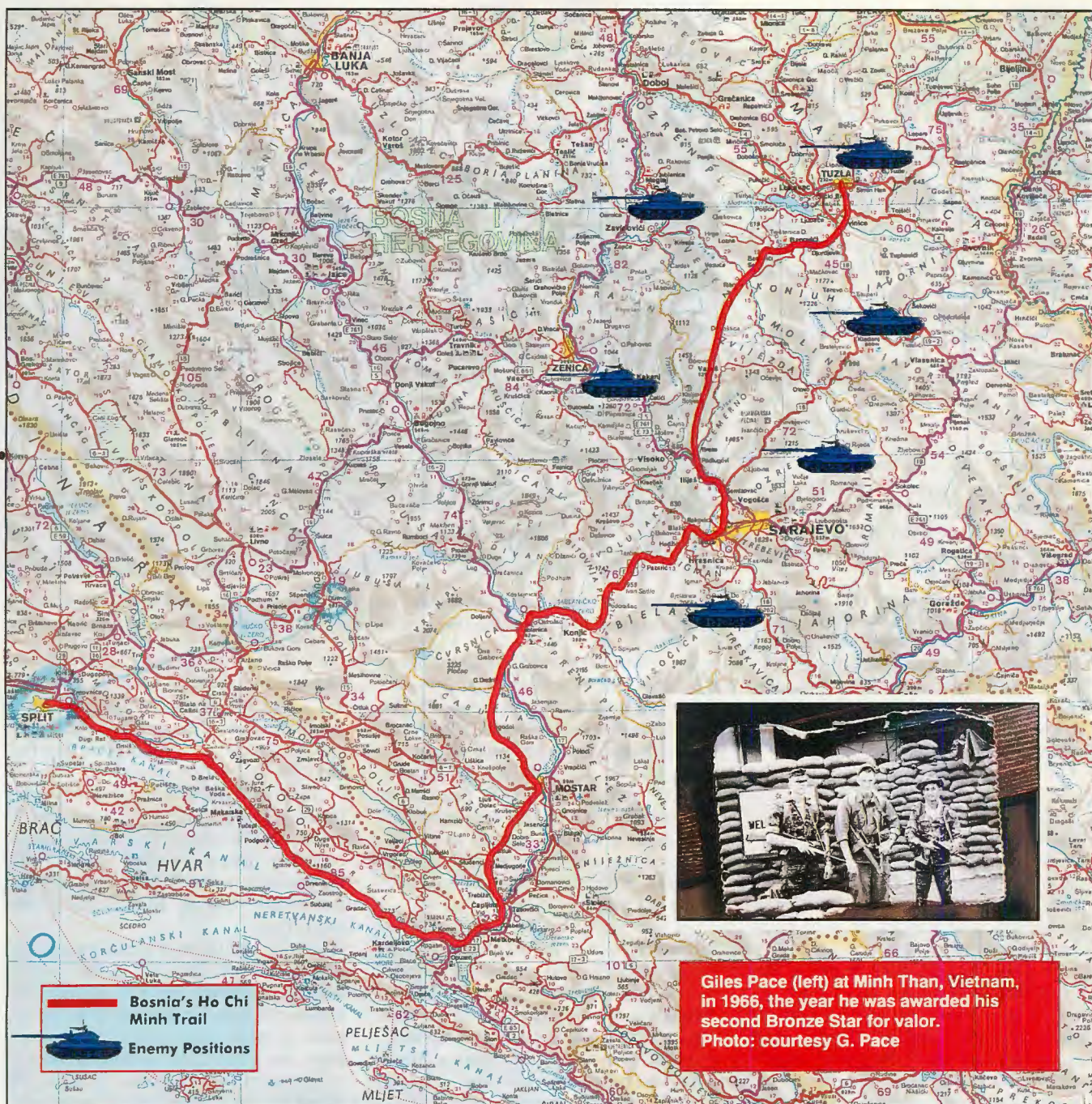
With gears grinding in protest, the two-truck convoy inched its way up the steep dirt track. Perched on top of the lead truck, a lone armed man kept a tight grip on his AK-47, his trained eyes scanning the ominous tree line. Above the winding track, the thickly forested mountain slopes vanished into low clouds — from these drizzled a cold rain.

Gritting his teeth against the damp discomfort of his perch, Giles Pace shook his head and muttered a professional assessment. "Not good ... this is bandit country, God's gift to guerrilla warfare ..."

In 1963, Pace left the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division to join the Special Forces. He served two tours in Vietnam on the sharp end in the infamous "Iron Triangle" bordering Laos and Cambodia: along the way he picked up two

Giles Pace, riding shotgun on supply truck, holds his Yugoslav M70AB2 rifle with finger outside trigger guard and safety off.





Bronze Stars (including one with "V"-device for Valor), the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Purple Heart. When I met him, Pace still wore the distinctive green beret, but this convoy had nothing to do with Special Forces, and Vietnam was a long time ago. His rain-sodden camouflage fatigues were not Vietnam-issue tiger stripe, but a cheap Yugoslavian woodland pattern. On this convoy, Giles Pace was a civilian volunteer: a lone American escorting desperately needed supplies to the Moslems of northern Bosnia.

I met Pace in the city of Split on Croatia's Adriatic coast, where he was scrounging supplies from aid organizations to fill empty trucks he had brought from Lukavac, a Moslem town some 90 miles north of Sarajevo. With the powerful

Bosnia's "Ho Chi Minh trail" winds South from Split, then north along small roads and valleys that snake through Yugoslav armor and artillery positions.

6-foot physique of a weight lifter, platinum blond hair, ice-blue eyes and the green beret, Pace was a hard man to miss. Given the reported drift toward Islamic fundamentalism among Bosnian Moslems, I was surprised to find an American Mormon from Las Vegas working with them.

Pace was clear on his stand. "I am here as an unpaid adviser in both civil and military affairs. If the Serbians were the ones suffering I would have gone with them, but it's Moslem families who are being slaughtered, so they're the ones I

came to help." He pointed to the badge on his green beret, running his finger along the motto on its metal scroll: *De Oppresso Liber*. "It means 'To Liberate the Oppressed.'" Pace said. "I was trained for that role and I guess I just never got out of the habit."

According to Pace, 80% of Special Forces training was about establishing infrastructure for the organization of local forces and defensive systems. Since leaving Special Forces, he has been to many of the world's hot spots: Rhodesia, Chile, Mozambique, Uganda, Botswana and South Africa, to name a few. In Lukavac, the isolated Bosnian Moslems consider Pace to be an invaluable asset.

Pace told me there was only one route by which convoys could get food supplies to northern Bosnia. He explained how

trucks are forced to follow " ... roads and valleys that actually go between heavy tank emplacements and artillery just off to one side or another. The local militia protect the road. Sometimes the convoy has to stop while battles take place ... then we can go on." Pace noted how trucks were frequently

forced to abandon regular roads in favor of narrow logging trails through heavily forested mountains.

Along the more remote stretches there was the constant threat of ambush from *Chetniks* (Serbian irregular forces). As Pace put it, it was " ... nip and tuck all the way down the line ... sitting ducks from every direction! ... I call it the Ho Chi Minh Trail of Bosnia," he concluded with a wry smile. "Wanna come?"

While this graphic description had given me serious concerns about the security of the route, the opportunity was too good to miss. When the convoy rolled out of Split, I was aboard.

After several hours' driving, we plunged off the main road onto a track that crossed a high, exposed plateau. Here, choking clouds of fine, white dust thrown up by the trucks could be seen for miles. Pace was anxious to get the convoy quickly across this open country and back into concealment of the wooded valley.

Near Fatal Ambush

He made sure I understood the problem loud and clear, announcing, "Anywhere along here you can get greased. This is a very dangerous place." I believed him. A huge pillar of smoke from smoldering fires still marked the spot of an earlier Yugoslav air strike.

At long last, the track began to descend once more to the valley floor, allowing us to worry less about air strikes and so get back to serious worrying about an ambush instead. In the morale-boosting manner I had come to expect, Pace chose this moment to describe the ambush he had narrowly survived on his way to

Pace's portable three-man bunker has twin steel skins lined with planks to absorb any metal spalling from hits. Once on-site, it is lowered into prepared pit; upper 2 feet with gunports will protrude above ground, protected by extra sandbagging.



Scorpion, a stripped-down "Mad Max"-inspired design for a fast antitank vehicle. Razor-tooth bars will be welded on either side in front to cut wire while moving cross-country.

Split: "I was in the lead car with Nazim the driver, and Yunus, my translator. It was nighttime and real dark, so we had to slow down for the sharp bends in the road. I hated being cooped up inside the car, as my field of fire was restricted, so I had the window wound right down. Yunus was just complaining about the draft when the first shots were fired. Instead of hitting the accelerator and rushing through, Nazim slammed on the brakes, right in the middle of the kill zone!

"I was sitting on the wrong side to return fire and was yelling at him to keep going while trying to get the AK muzzle past his face to shoot through the window. Yunus was down on the back seat screaming we were going to die and, to my utter disbelief, Nazim started to make a three-point turn right in the kill zone — I was ready to shoot him myself!

"All the time, I could see the muzzle flashes of the ambush party ahead of us. Green tracer was zipping past and rounds were ricocheting off rocks and thudding into the earth right next to us. I knew we were dead meat and was frustrated — I couldn't even return fire; I was just waiting for an RPG rocket to turn us into fresh kabobs.

"Anyway — I don't know how — Nazim managed to turn the car and we

shot back up the road like a bat out of hell, with more tracer hot on our tail until Yunus and I had to scream at Nazim to slow down before he crashed the car and did a better job of killing us than the Chetniks."

Pace's tale did little to restore my confidence. As dusk fell, I was convinced I could see Chetniks lurking behind every bush. My subsequent relief when we left the forest to rejoin the tarmac road, just before reaching Konjic, was to be short-lived.

Konjic and the road ahead were being heavily shelled. Pace halted the convoy beneath the shelter of a low hill-line just outside the town; he announced we would have to spend the night there. To complete our misery, an autumn rainstorm rolled out of the mountains. Climbing on top of the trucks, everyone in the convoy crawled under the tarpaulins to huddle for warmth and try, despite the artillery barrage and the rain, to snatch a few hours' sleep.

Later, in the predawn chill, the rain was worse, but at least the barrage had stopped; we moved on.

With the rain came additional problems. The heavy trucks churned up the surface of the dirt track. As we struggled to negotiate the first low hill with our wheels spinning in the mud, a Yugoslav army machine-gunner began to zero in. Pace decided to take the convoy back to the nearest stretch of hard road to wait for the rain to stop and for the trail to dry out. Then, having arranged alternative security for the trucks, we made a separate dash ahead for Lukavac in a car.

The rain kept up. When we reached the first Moslem checkpoint, the sentries rec-

ognized Pace and scurried from their roadside shelters to greet him. As he handed out cigarettes, he joked that at least Yugoslav army military activity was dramatically reduced on rainy days. His theory was that since the Moslems had little strike-back capability, the Yugoslav army could shell them with impunity every day without getting wet in the bargain.

Yugoslav Army Shooting Gallery

This theory became more pertinent at another checkpoint close to Lukavac, where sentries looked serious as they gesticulated up the road ahead. When I questioned Pace, he explained how the last 10km of road into town was dominated by Yugoslav army positions in the nearby ridges. The Yugoslav army had a nasty habit of using twin- and quad-barreled 23mm anti-aircraft guns on passing traffic. He grinned as he climbed back into the car and announced, "We're about to enter the shooting gallery."

Scanning the ridge while struggling into my flak jacket. I tried to draw comfort from the low clouds, praying Pace was correct that all Yugoslav army gunners were sheltering snugly in their bunkers. I could not help noticing how the exposed, snaking road was ominously littered with burned-out wrecks of cars that had not made it.

As my companion gunned the throttle and took off at breakneck speed, I sank low into my seat doing my best to disappear, tortoise-like, between the ceramic plates of the flak jacket and under my U.S.-issue Kevlar helmet. Pace, as ever doing his bit to keep up my morale, informed me that 23mm antiaircraft fire would slice through the car, the Kevlar helmet, the ceramic plates and me like a hot knife through butter.

Lukavac lies in the center of the industrial region of the former Yugoslavia. When we rolled into town, past the smoking chimney stacks of the local power station, I was relieved to be clear of direct-fire Yugoslav army weapons and looked forward to a meal and a good night's sleep.

Pace chose this moment to mention that the factory complex I could see in the

last glimmer of daylight on the town's outskirts had previously been used as a Yugoslavian chemical weapons plant. Hundreds of tons of dangerous liquid chemicals were stored there, protected only by a few salt-filled sandbags. If the plant went up, the death toll could run into the hundreds of thousands. Yugoslav army attempts to close down the neighboring power station by shelling it had so far led to five direct hits on the chemical plant. The discovery that Lukavac was a time bomb waiting to explode was also not conducive to a good night's sleep.

Borrowed From Mad Max

The next day began with a look at Pace's efforts to solve the Bosnians' chronic lack of any mobile antitank capability. His answer was "the Scorpion," a homemade anti-tank vehicle reminiscent of "Mad Max" films.

Lacking armor, Pace had concentrated on speed, stripping down BMW cars because of their six-cylinder engines, and attaching tractor wheels in the Scorpion's rear to improve cross-country performance. Scorpions would be manned by troops armed with bazookas, rocket launchers or whatever they scrounge for killing tanks in Bosnia.

After a whirlwind tour of the region, evening was drawing in before we visited the front lines near Lukavac, held by the Moslem militia. The Bosnian army (the *BIN TO*) was being used as a mobile reserve to plug gaps opened up by Yugoslav army offensives. As we crouched in the muddy trenches, chatting to duty soldiers in the deepening gloom, the nightly hate began, starting with an exchange of small-arms fire and working up to the crump of mortar and tank rounds.

Pace said Yugoslav army offensives were preceded by intense bombardments to drive Moslem forces to pull back. During these offensives all prisoners, civilian or otherwise, were routinely massacred. Appalled by this, Pace told me that even during the worst excesses of the Vietnam War he had never known a 100% kill ratio among civilians caught up in the fighting. He also expressed anger at the non-interventionist policy of the Western powers and the refusal of the United Nations to

take realistic steps to prevent the collapse of Bosnia's government.

Moreover, Pace added that this policy will have serious repercussions, as Bosnian Moslems are increasingly forced to turn toward the Middle East and Islamic fundamentalism.

Pace warned that the West "... is going to pay the price, because ... there are people in this world who will help, and they will come here with food, they will come here with guns and they will come here with volunteers because the [United Nations] just blew these people off ... allowing the legal, elected, democratic government of Bosnia, which has a flag at the United Nations, to be broken down and pounded every day by heavy artillery ... As a result, Bosnia is disintegrating into a system of small warlord fiefdoms — each community developing its own systems of supply, over all borders ... through Europe and throughout the Middle East. Exactly what our president [Bush] says he does not want to create — he does not want another Vietnam, he does not want to create an insurgency program, he does not want to develop a 10-year war — is exactly what is happening."

Once a warlord system is allowed to develop, it will be impossible to guarantee regional stability for years to come, according to Pace. Confirmation of a developing Islamic arms pipeline was provided by the impounding of an Iranian arms shipment at Zagreb's airport in September.

Unused Airport

To add further grist to his mill, on the following day Pace took me to see a large, former Yugoslavian air force base near Tuzla, a few kilometers from Lukavac. This is one of the areas where U.N. forces have been asked to secure a route for humanitarian aid.

Having witnessed firsthand the dangers of an overland convoy to this region, I was amazed to see that Tuzla had an airport with a perfectly usable 2,400-meter runway. Furthermore, unlike the airport at Sarajevo, it was not overlooked by Yugoslav-army-held mountains. Nor, unlike the airport at Sarajevo, did it suffer from localized factional fighting. In fact, the nearest Yugoslav army lines to the Tuzla airport were from 12 to 17 miles away (well beyond the range of the kind of ground-to-air missiles which shot down the Italian Hercules at Sarajevo), yet at the time of my visit the United Nations had no plans to utilize this airport.

As we strolled down the empty Tuzla runway surrounded by nothing but peace and quiet, Pace expressed his concerns about the manner in which regional policy is decided: "Take notice, I'm the only American here. Where is your CIA? Where is your intelligence gathering? ... If they

Continued on page 67



Member of Moslem militia, which holds front line near Lukavac. Pace believes lack of support from United Nations will force Bosnian Moslems toward Islamic fundamentalists in the Middle East.

LOST LIN



Official photos released by North Vietnamese of captains Certain and Simpson after their B-52 was shot down were the pilots' life insurance — the world now knew they were alive.

EBACKERS



SOF Interviews First B-52 Crew Shot Down Over Hanoi

by Dale B. Cooper

“Gentlemen, your target tonight is Hanoi.”

It has been 20 years since Colonel James R. McCarthy began a briefing for Wave-1 of the first B-52 attack on Hanoi with this simple statement on 18 December 1972. “Having sat through more than 1,200 pre-departure combat briefings myself, I can truthfully say that this group of combat crews was the most attentive I have ever seen,” McCarthy later recalled.

“It was so quiet, you could have heard a pin drop,” Captain Robert G. Certain remembered; he and two comrades were to become the first B-52 crew members shot down and captured by the North Vietnamese during the war.

The decision to commit half of the Strategic Air Command’s (SAC) worldwide fleet of 450 B-52 bombers to the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong is believed to have come when Admiral Thomas Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reportedly told President Nixon, “This is your chance to use military power to win this war, and if you don’t, I’ll hold you responsible.”

B-52 Stratofortresses dropped a total of 35,544 bombs during Linebacker II.
Photo: USAF

Officially, the massive aerial bombardment of North Vietnam was called Operation Linebacker II, because President Nixon was the nation's No. 1 football fan, but planners at SAC called the campaign "the 11-Day War."

The hammer fell on the Hanoi-Haiphong area shortly before 8 p.m. local time on the evening of 18 December when the first wave of 48 B-52s bombed three MiG airfields (Hoa Lac, Kep and Phuc Yen). The bombers also attacked the Kinh No vehicle repair yards and the Yen Vien railroad yards.

This date was also forever burned into the psyches of the B-52 crew members who struck at the enemy's jugular vein — especially those three airmen who became the first B-52 crewmen captured during the Vietnam War. In an exclusive interview with *Soldier Of Fortune*, the former POWs recounted in vivid detail the night they were shot down over Hanoi.

Bombs Away

The first Stratofortress to fall from the skies over Hanoi during Linebacker provided one of many tragic and affecting stories of the Vietnam War.

Lieutenant Colonel Donald L. Rissi had flown to Guam to finish the last two weeks with a crew from Blytheville Air Force Base (AFB) in Arkansas before he was returning to Blytheville to become commander of the 340th Bomb Squadron, 97th Bomb Wing. Rissi's crew had been scheduled to rotate stateside on 4 December but the replacement crew from Loring AFB, Maine, had been snowed in.

When the replacement crew finally arrived in Guam, it was minus two primary crew members. Before the replacement crew could be certified for combat it required additional training, which shifted the "Go Home" date of Rissi's crew to 18 December.

From Anderson Air Base in Guam, it is 2,650 statute miles to Hanoi, however, combat air routing lengthened the one-way distance to 3,000 miles. Certain plotted a course that took his B-52 across South Vietnam, up through Laos, then doglegged right on a northwest-to-southeast heading into Hanoi. Eight hours and 20 minutes into the 16-hour, round-trip flight, a Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) exploded off the port side of his Stratofortress, setting the B-52 ablaze.

"We had just opened the bomb-bay doors and were in our final countdown, about 10 seconds to bombs away, when we were hit at 35,000 feet," recalled radar navigator (bombardier) Major Richard E. Johnson.

Up to this point the aircraft had been flying straight and level into Hanoi. They were "just sitting up there fat, dumb and happy," Johnson recalled; he never heard anyone call out "Missiles!" or anything else — just a big *thump* when they got hit.

Captain Richard T. Simpson, the Electronic Warfare Officer (EWO), had been monitoring all radar emissions from the ground. "But nothing was tracking our aircraft at the time we were hit," he remembered.

The navigator (Certain) and radar navigator (Johnson) sat side by side on the lower deck of the B-52, about 8 feet below and behind the pilot and co-pilot, both sitting about the same distance ahead of the gunner and EWO on the upper deck.

The first indication Certain and Johnson had of trouble was a loss of power to their radar scopes. "They just went blank, and being

within 10 seconds of the bomb-release point, that was not good news," Certain noted. He at first had thought the problem was just an electrical malfunction. But he quickly knew something was seriously wrong when the co-pilot, First Lieutenant Robert J. Thomas, yelled into the intercom, "They got the pilot!"

Looking over their shoulders through a porthole into the forward wheel well, Certain and Johnson knew their aircraft was doomed when they saw a raging inferno. Flames were burning like a blowtorch just ahead of the bomb bay and just below the mid-body fuel tank, containing 10,000 pounds of JP-4.

"I yelled at the bombardier and told him to jettison the weapons [27 of the 750-pound bombs] we were carrying," Certain said.

"I tried to hit the salvo button," Johnson added, "but I don't think we got rid of the bombs. I never did feel them go."

Looking at the clock on his console, Certain noted the SAM exploded at 1313 Greenwich Mean Time. A few seconds later, another SAM exploded nearby. But Simpson couldn't later confirm a second SAM hit.

The SAMs launched against Rissi's formation must have been salvoed ballistically into a gap where the bombers were flying straight and level. In the end, it really didn't matter whether a second SAM hit the B-52. The first SAM was a killing shot that sent red-hot shrapnel slicing through the skin of the B-52, mortally wounding its pilot, Rissi, and its gunner, Master Sergeant Walter L. Ferguson.

Simpson was seated beside Ferguson facing aft on the upper deck behind the cockpit, but today the EWO can't say for sure whether Ferguson was dead in his seat. "Maybe he was only unconscious," Simpson reflected, but he still remembers seeing the gunner's helmet in the glow of electrical panels that were exploding and sending showers of blue sparks bouncing off the cabin walls.

Although the co-pilot had cried out that the enemy got the pilot, Certain can remember hearing Rissi say, "I'm alive," just before ejecting from the crippled bomber. Certain added that Thomas, who had sat next to Rissi on the flight deck, was also alive when last seen. But Thomas was never heard from again.

Was Rissi Shot?

Was the co-pilot killed on the ground like other U.S. airmen? No one will ever know. Certain can only speculate on what might have happened to Thomas: "Bobby could have been shot on the ground, however, his ejection seat may have failed, or he was killed when the second SAM exploded."

Neither Certain, Simpson or Johnson later saw the bodies of Thomas or Ferguson, but Certain was paraded past Rissi's body on the ground after being captured by the North Vietnamese. Because of a gaping abdominal wound from one side of the pilot's body to the other, Certain believes Rissi died before his parachute carried him to the ground.

Proving whether a crew member died in his chute or was shot on the ground is impossible. The North Vietnamese didn't bother performing autopsies on dead American airmen. There was no evidence of foul play by the time Rissi's remains were returned to the United States in 1976 along with the remains of Thomas and Ferguson and what turned out to be the remains of a Vietnamese.

Unlike Westerners who embalm bodies, Certain says the North Vietnamese simply bury bodies; after a year in the ground they exhume the remains, scrape any remaining tissue from the bones, then re-inter the disjointed bones in a small sealed container — saves space in cemeteries. Thomas' widow, Earlyn, refused to accept her husband's alleged remains after she learned pathologists at the Armed Forces Identification Laboratory in Honolulu used a small finger bone to identify them. This method simply wasn't good enough for her.



Maj. Johnson arrives at Blytheville AFB, Arkansas, after spending 102 days in North Vietnamese captivity. Photo: USAF

Certain's wife was looking forward to celebrating Christmas with her husband in Blytheville when an officer from the base accompanied by an Air Force chaplain knocked on her door and informed her that Certain was "missing in action" over North Vietnam.

Perilous Jumps

Ironically, his brother, Capt. John Certain, had been a KC-135 tanker pilot orbiting a refueling track called "Purple Anchor" over the Gulf of Tonkin on the night of 18 December: he had seen a B-52 get hit over Hanoi and go down in flames — he was later informed it had been his brother's bomber.

Certain, Johnson, Simpson and Rissi all ejected at approximately the bomb-release point where 18 B-52s had already dropped their ordnance. Each man free-fell about 20,000 feet before his parachute deployed automatically. "When my chute opened, I was hanging over the target watching the last bombs from the last aircraft explode in the rail yard," Certain remembered.

The wind blew Certain away from the target and over his crashed plane. About five miles farther, he hit the ground and was surrounded by 50 North Vietnamese including four militiamen armed with AK-47s. "I was in a ditch when the villagers spotted me," Certain said, describing being stripped to his underwear, tied up and hauled off to a village.

When Johnson ejected, he could see their aircraft flying away trailing smoke, then do a gentle turn, roll over and plunge nose-first into the ground about 10 miles west of Hanoi. "I saw the bail-out light come on, and Certain's helmet disappear below me as he ejected downward," he recalled.

The bomber had been banking about 60 degrees to the right when Simpson decided to bail out. Unable to communicate and seeing the bail-out light flashing on his console, Simpson ejected upward into the slipstream of the crippled B-52. "Below, I could see SAMs going off, bombs exploding in Hanoi and flames shooting up through the clouds," he remembered.

Simpson flew 104 combat missions in EB-66s (Ravens) in 1969 and 100 combat missions in a B-52: he also logged 1,000 hours in F-4 Phantoms after the war without ever having to "punch out" again — once over Hanoi was enough.

Johnson landed about a quarter-mile from a village and moved very slowly across a plowed field, laying low until villagers who came looking for him passed. He remembered feeling "very lonely, very isolated" as he tried to logically decide if the best way was to go east toward the water, or west toward the mountains.

There were many roads around where Johnson landed, so that every time he moved, he wound up near one. At daylight, a woman spotted him in a field. She

sounded the alarm and Johnson was captured after 12 hours evading his captors. He was taken to a small village and held there until two English-speaking North Vietnamese, a man and a woman, came and questioned him.

"They knew who I was," Johnson said; they carried a sheet of paper with the names of at least two fellow crewmen on it: Rissi and Certain. At this point in the war, nothing the North Vietnamese did surprised Johnson. So where did they get a list of the crew? "Maybe they found it at the crash site among the wreckage."

Simpson landed on the roof of a village building and was captured. Unlike Certain and Johnson who were not injured, Simpson suffered severe cuts and some shrapnel in his arms and legs.

The peasants who captured the EWO beat him over the head with bamboo sticks, stripped, bound and gagged him, then stuck him in a room for a couple hours before someone arrived with a truck. They hauled Simpson and Certain off to Hoa Lo prison in Hanoi, which downed airmen called the Hanoi Hilton — today the site of a proposed luxury hotel.

North Vietnamese Account Of The Capture

An account of the capture of Rissi's crew was written by Anh Chinh, published in *Nhan Dan*, a Hanoi daily newspaper on 20 December 1972 and titled "Capture of B-52 Pirate Crew."

"The B-52G, the latest version of the B-52's, was flying exposed in the night sky which was lit up by the fire of missiles and the long range anti-aircraft artillery of the army and people of Hanoi and Vinh Phu," the paper recounted. According to the story, Rissi's bomber was hit at approximately 2015 hours local time in Hanoi.

"It was dealt a blow which corresponded precisely with its imposing size. It instantly broke up and burst immediately into a flaming torch," the story continued.

Unlike U.S. newspapers which usually confine their editorializing to the "Op-Ed" page, *Nhan Dan* took the opportunity to criticize the United States in this account: "Throughout both of the periods when Johnson and Nixon have waged air wars of destruction against North Vietnam, never has there been such a torch in the skies around the capital, caused by the large, orange U.S. plane.

"The healthier and more thundering, the more tragic does something seem in

death: the flaming torch plunged and its impetus carried it several kilometers before it fell into a field belonging to Hamlet D, Township P., Kim An District."

Wreckage from the crew's downed bomber was scattered over several kilometers. The nose of the aircraft was buried in a rice field along Route 3. The fuselage was laying in a field west of the road. Reporter Anh Chinh said he and a number of people, including militia and NVA troops, climbed on the fuselage to look the following morning:

"The long, wide and high section of the B-52G made us dizzy. There wasn't anyone in the vehicles going up and down the road below who didn't slow in order to gain further satisfaction from staring at the wreckage.

"The letters 'B-52G, United States of America' were painted in black, not only in one, but in many places on the section of the plane, followed by annotations as 'six-man flight crew, it is necessary to use oil-type JP-4,' etc.

"And above all of this, large, bright, arrogant and hooligan-like was the insignia of the United States Strategic Air Command, with a steel fist thrust-up hideously through a blue sky and white clouds, grasping three thunderbolts and an olive branch.

"The interior of the plane bristled with electronic lights intertwined with wiring of all sizes and colors. There was even a bottle of perfumed water, several tubes of toothpaste, pieces of clothing caught on the bottom of ejection seats, and dried blood."

According to Anh Chinh, all six airmen ejected from the aircraft. He wrote: "Only the bottoms of the ejection seats were there ... Two of them came down in a rice field where they were rounded up by the militia. One, Richard Thomas Simpson, a 31-year-old captain, surrendered docilely. Another, Robert Glenn Certain, a 25-year-old captain, hastily grabbed for his pistol, a Smith and Weston [sic], but in the wink of the eye he lowered his head before the guns of our militia."

Before being surrounded by militiamen, Certain says he stuffed the barrel of his revolver into the dirt so they couldn't shoot him with his own gun. He does not remember reaching for it as the *Nhan Dan* correspondent reported.

Like other American prisoners of war, Johnson, Certain and Simpson were abused during lengthy interrogations on their first night of captivity. But their being the first B-52 crew captured proved to be a blessing in disguise.

"We were pretty hot news," Certain



said. Along with five other airmen, including Simpson and Johnson, he was shown off to reporters in Hanoi on 19 December, the day their wives and parents were notified they were Missing In Action.

"That was really fortunate for us," Certain noted, "because it meant that our pictures were released to the international press corps within 24 hours of our capture. Once my picture was on the wire service I felt safe. For my family, it gave them confirmation that I was alive and uninjured." Certain spent 102 days in the Hanoi Hilton before being repatriated along with 590 other American POWs.



Capt. Certain is turned over to USAF personnel in Hanoi upon his release. Photo: USAF

Although they were captured on the same day, within hours of each other and sent to the same prison, Johnson didn't see Simpson or Certain for several weeks. Every day was very much the same in prison, except during the "11-Day War" when B-52s bombed Hanoi. The ground shook from a total of 35,544 bombs dropped on 734 targets in the Hanoi-Haiphong area.

The crump of bombs hitting the ground was cause for celebration among American POWs at the Hanoi Hilton. North Vietnamese guards cowered, but the prisoners cheered wildly as the walls of the prison shook and plaster fell from the cell ceilings.

Certain and his cellmate, Maj. Fernando Alexander, who was from the second B-52 shot down, had to move to another cell when the concussions from a strike on gun positions near the Hoa Lo prison blew the cell door off its hinges one afternoon. "We were moved to a two-man cell in a section of the prison we called Heartbreak Hotel," Certain said, "but we weren't tortured." A week later, Certain and his friend were moved into another cell with seven other POWs.

Twenty years have given Johnson, Certain and Simpson time to reflect on their captivity and their roles in the Vietnam War. "I didn't want to be a professional POW," noted Johnson, who at age 56 now

maintains the Nav-Base in the flight planning system at Federal Express in Memphis, Tennessee. "I tried not to live in the past, but not too far in the future either," he added, because he didn't want being shot down to be the high point of his Air Force career.

Johnson and his buddies all retired as lieutenant colonels with 24 years' service in the Air Force. However, Certain remains in the reserves.

Neither Certain, Johnson or Simpson hold any regrets, although they hated to lose Rissi, Thomas and Ferguson — coming home without them was very painful.

"I couldn't face their families," recalled Certain, who has stayed in touch with Johnson and Simpson since the war.

Sitting Ducks Over Hanoi

After the initial shock of learning Hanoi was the target, Rissi's crew had gone about the business of waging war with the same degree of professionalism they had shown on previous missions. The armada of B-52s from Guam stretched for 30 miles as the strike force crossed over South Vietnam and headed northwest to Laos, where it was supposed to compress into a nine-mile-long bomber stream.

"As we approached the point where we were to bunch up, the two cells behind us discovered they were to be at the rendezvous point at exactly the same time and altitude, rather than spaced out at three-minute intervals, and had to do some dodging to avoid midair collisions," Certain noted.

"This was not just another mission — [we were] going to the heart of the threat," added Simpson, who recalled wondering aloud, "Are we really doing this right? Going straight and level across the target at 35,000 feet?"

Having flown tactical aircraft on four previous tours in Vietnam, Simpson was not happy about being in a BUFF, "Big Ugly Fat Fella," a nickname given

B-52s. "They are too slow, too vulnerable," he noted recently. He had preferred being a fighter jock who could jink out of harm's way.

"I'm not trying to second-guess the target planners after 20 years," added Simpson, now 50. Today he helps design defensive systems for the Raytheon Corp. in Goleta, California. "But knowing tactics the way I do, I would not have deployed B-52s against North Vietnam the way we did."

When the 87 B-52s from Guam and 42 more from Thailand had arrived in three waves to begin their bombing runs, they were instructed to fly "straight and level" despite any threat from MiGs or SAMs.

According to SAC officials, B-52 bombing computers required a certain amount of straight-and-level flight to ensure that all bombs fell on military targets and not in civilian areas. Other reasons for straight-and-level flying were to "maximize" Electronic Countermeasure (ECM) support of each cell of three aircraft and to "minimize" the danger of midair collisions.

However, such instructions didn't make sense to the men who flew into the heart of Hanoi. "Flying straight and level at the same altitude and on the same course, day after day, was too predictable," Simpson said. "It was too easy for NVA gunners who could predict the flight paths of planes by simply watching the first cell pass overhead."

Bombardier Johnson questioned the post-target turn that defeated mutual support among the three bombers; he also disputed withdrawing from Hanoi into a 150-knot head wind.

"I guess anybody who believes in air power feels it should be employed correctly. And I think there were reservations among many crews as to whether what we were doing was in the best interest of the country, the Air Force, or anybody else for that matter. Sometimes it seemed kind of futile flying the same course to the same target at the same time of day and same altitude," Johnson noted. "After all, how effective can that be?"

In addition to having reservations about flying over Hanoi like ducks in a shooting gallery, B-52 crews also had misgivings about the sort of missions they were being ordered to fly. "I questioned the bombing of so-called choke points to limit the flow of supplies to the south. I wondered how effective this was," Johnson said.

Simpson added: "In retrospect, the war was already lost, but not the objectives of the Hanoi raids."

In the short haul, strategic bombing of North Vietnam's heartland brought Hanoi back to the bargaining table in Paris, where a peace treaty was signed one month after the last B-52 raid.

"In the long haul, I'm not sure we got

an honorable peace out of this, because we ended up pulling out and abandoning everything," Simpson lamented. "We lost a lot of people over there."

Of the 92 B-52 crewmen who went down over North Vietnam, 14 were KIA, 14 were reported as MIAs, 31 were rescued and 33 became POWs. Of the 33 POWs, two pilots and Certain became chaplains. But Certain now says his calling was not a "battlefield conversion."

"I decided to enter the ministry before going to Vietnam," Certain said. "The POW experience confirmed my decision."

Although time has a habit of making some things fuzzy in the minds of men who have fought America's wars, some things remain as vivid today as they were 20 years ago. The B-52 crewmen who flew over the outskirts of Hanoi and Haiphong will never forget the fireworks. North Vietnam fired no fewer than 1,293 SAM missiles during Linebacker II, exhausting their supply of SAMs.

During this "11-Day War," a total of 714 sorties were flown by B-52 Stratofortresses. Fifteen aircraft, including Certain's bomber, were lost to SAMs; also lost were two F-4 Phantoms flying Combat Air Patrol (CAP) and two F-111As flying SAM suppression. However, none of the B-52s were shot down by MiGs as Hanoi claimed — in fact, just the opposite occurred.

Staff Sergeant Samuel O. Turner, a tail gunner on a B-52D from of the 307th Strategic Wing at U-Tapao, Thailand, became the first enlisted man and the first gunner to shoot down a MiG-21 over Hanoi. Another B-52 tail gunner claimed a MiG kill on the first night of Linebacker II, but lack of sufficient evidence caused that kill to be disallowed.

Capt. Simpson next to pylon-mounted rack of 750-pound bombs on B-52 at Anderson Air Base, Guam.
Photo: courtesy Tom Simpson



Six thousand-mile round trip from Guam to Hanoi Took 16 hours and required in-flight refueling. Photo: USAF

The North Vietnamese returned 591 American POWs during Operation Homecoming in 1973, but there are still some 2,500 other U.S. servicemen unaccounted for. The majority are pilots — half are listed as KIA, with remains not returned. The rest are listed as MIAs. Only 9% of the 565 Americans missing in Laos were returned, and these were released only because they had been turned over to Hanoi. Nothing has been heard of 76 Americans missing in Cambodia.

Driving Home The Message

Despite the loss of life among B-52 crews, Linebacker II demonstrated to North Vietnam that the United States was serious about bringing its enemies to the negotiating table and ending the war.

In those 11 days, 18 through 29 December (excluding Christmas Day), B-52s were credited with destroying one-fourth of North Vietnam's petroleum reserves, along with 80% of its electrical generating capacity and virtually its entire supply of SAMs. "The message was crystal clear," Simpson concluded. "If you don't negoti-

ate, we can annihilate you."

North Vietnam apparently got the message. Its delegates returned to the peace table in Paris on 8 January 1973. Three weeks later, Le Duc Tho signed on the dotted line for Hanoi — 11 years of war in Southeast Asia officially ended.

Although Certain is hard-pressed to believe any POWs or MIAs are still alive after all these years, he's sure Hanoi can account for most of the missing.

"When I was marched past Don Rissi's body shortly after being captured, I saw a North Vietnamese official with Don's flight suit, ID card and dogtags, meticulously recording the time and date of his death in a small blue book," Certain looked back grimly, "and if they recorded his death, they recorded the deaths of other U.S. servicemen."

While Certain is willing to forgive his former enemy, there are others who will never forgive until the POW/MIA issue is resolved to their satisfaction.

Dale B. Cooper is a frequent contributor to SOF.

SILVER BADGE OF COURAGE

SOG Prisoner Snatch On Ho Chi Minh Trail Earns Author Rare "Special Recognition Award"

by John L. Plaster

Though the famed SOG knife has become the Vietnam War's most sought-after Special Operations artifact — with even reproductions commanding hundreds of dollars — this attractive blade is not the rarest nor most valuable SOG souvenir.

Unknown except to the virtual handful of Green Beret recon team leaders who received one is MACV-SOG's (Military Assistance Command Vietnam — Studies and Observations Group) most coveted

award: the boxed, presentation Browning Hi-Power pistol.

Officially designated the "Reconnaissance Team Leader Special Recognition Award," it was called the "Silver Pistol" in SOG recon circles. Each pistol was presented personally by the chief of SOG in a Saigon ceremony, usually to recognize an especially dramatic mission, or for earning a high award such as the Medal of Honor.

It's unlikely you'll ever see these



Illustration: Ralph Butler

extremely rare pistols — which have yet to appear even in a museum. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first public disclosure of their very existence.

Acquired clandestinely to prevent their being traced back to the United States, SOG's weaponry included an amazing array of everything from suppressed Sten guns to Walther autoloaders and even the unique Gyrojet rocket pistol. Our reliance upon these non-standard weapons was driven by the need for "deniability" should team gear fall into foreign hands: Like Mr. Phelps and his fictional "Mission: Impossible" force, SOG's cross-border forays could not leave behind any embarrassing evidence.

It was this deniability requirement that caused our armory to include a goodly number of Browning 9mm Hi-Power pistols, which became SOG's favored

However, the accompanying paperwork — without which you could not bring it home — necessarily identified this weapon as being in the possession of a SOG trooper. Issued complete with war trophy documents and an export license application from the U.S. Embassy, it included a citation which, like so many SOG items, makes no direct reference even to SOG's existence.

During my three years in SOG, I personally knew of only a half-dozen SOG pistols being presented to fellow recon team leaders. And of these, three were given to Medal of Honor winners.

These Medal of Honor recipients — Robert Howard, Fred Zabitoski and Franklin Miller — were all from CCC (Command and Control Central) at Kontum. The only other living SOG Medal of Honor winner, Jon Cavaiani, a CCN

estimate of about 40, or perhaps 50, total of these pistols in existence.

And at least one SOG pistol is floating around, because it was stolen from a former recon-team leader's hold baggage en route from Germany to a stateside military post. It says a lot about how absolutely selfless Colonel Robert Howard is, that when he learned this NCO's pistol was lost, he gave him his own to replace it! (Incidentally, Col. Howard is beyond question the most highly decorated living American, awarded the Medal of Honor, two Distinguished Service Crosses, the Silver Star and eight Purple Hearts. People sometimes ask why I stayed so long in Vietnam. I reply: For the honor of knowing and fighting beside such fine soldiers as Robert Howard.)



Recon Team California shortly after Ashtray II. American personnel from left to right are John Yancey and Rex Jaco, along with Galen Musselman who replaced the badly wounded Rich Woody. Photo: Author's collection

combat sidearm. With solid steel construction and a large magazine capacity, the Browning proved rugged, reliable and effective.

Sometime in late 1968 or early 1969, SOG headquarters arranged for a small number of these clandestinely acquired Browning pistols to be chrome-plated and boxed. It was a fittingly clandestine award for a fittingly clandestine project.

Each pistol came in a handsome, handmade black-lacquered case, lined in aquamarine blue velvet including an engraved brass plate with the recipient's name. But in keeping with SOG's "hush-hush" tradition, even the plate avoided using the terms "SOG" or "Special Forces," describing the recipient only as a "MACV Long Range Recon Team Leader."

(Command and Control North) man, was a POW and not released by Hanoi until after SOG was disbanded, so he could not have received a Silver Pistol.

In several cases, recon men did not live long enough to be presented the SOG pistols they deserved. In fact, when I learned I was to be awarded a Silver Pistol, I was so concerned about too soon "biting the dust" that I requested an immediate presentation so I could carry it home on leave. Considering our high casualty rates, it was not melodramatic to think you were living on borrowed time.

Still, some other team leaders received pistols, which, if you multiply this fact over time and take into account that recon team leaders at CCN and CCS (Command and Control South) were also presented with Brownings, will yield a realistic

The Story Of Mission Ashtray II

If I could cut my SOG pistol into eight pieces, I'd hand these out to my American teammates on "Mission Ashtray II," because it was our joint effort, referred to in the citation as a "brilliant POW snatch," that led to my receiving a Silver Pistol.

It was with these men — Captain Fred Krupa and a group of sergeants: Rex Jaco, John Yancey, Richard Woody, Paul Kennicott, R. Michael Grace and David Galaso — that we would attempt an especially hazardous mission: ambushing a North Vietnamese truck convoy on the heavily defended Ho Chi Minh Trail. We would not merely destroy trucks, but seize the lead truck driver and run with him all night to escape the numerous



SOG was among many U.S. units that procured locally made patches, usually hand-sewn. While the wearing of such patches was commonplace and unofficially accepted, such insignia was not authorized for regulation wear outside the combat zone.

KEEPING IT STRAIGHT

To help clear up some of the confusion about SOG unit designations, here's a brief explanation:

SOG: Sometimes mistakenly cited as "Special Operations Group," the SOG initials actually represented "Studies and Observation Group," the cross-border program's official cover name. If a curious reporter inquired, he was told SOG existed to perform scholarly and technical research on the Vietnam War, a sufficiently boring explanation to put the media-types to sleep. Even the relationship between SOG and its Special Forces recon units was classified "secret." The C&C recon controlling office at SOG was OPS-35. (Its next-door office, OPS-34A, became famous in the "Pentagon Papers" for having launched the secret 1964 Vietnamese commando raid that escalated into the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. I once talked to the USMC Force Recon adviser to that historic mission; he boasted, "Just blame me! Fuck it! I'm the guy who started the whole blasted war!")

SPECIAL OPERATIONS AUGMENTATION: The secret relationship between Special Forces and SOG was masked by designating us "Special Operations Augmentation, 5th Special Forces Group," but we actually had no operational relationship with 5th SF Group; our true "next-higher" was SOG in Saigon. And SOG's next-higher was the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

PROJECT DELTA: For a short while in 1964-65, before Project Omega was ready to begin

operations in Laos, the 5th Special Forces Group's Project Delta recon unit — no relationship whatsoever with today's Delta Force — was responsible for cross-border forays. An outstanding outfit, Project Delta was the model for SOG recon; once Omega took over the classified cross-border recon mission, Project Delta reverted to in-country-only recon operations, which it continued through 1970.

PROJECTS OMEGA AND SIGMA, C&C, CCN, CCC, CCS, TF2AE, etc.: These are all names for essentially the same classified Special Forces cross-border recon units; to the men inside SOG, all these name changes made no difference, although they reflected internal reorganization. During the war we usually referred to ourselves as "C and C," for Command and Control North or South or Central, but some of the real old-timers (I only spent three years in SOG, while some men had twice this much time) used the term, "Combined Studies," the old cover name for clandestine Special Forces operations performed under CIA control.

TEAM NAMES: In general, Ban Me Thuot-based CCS recon teams were named after tools, such as RT Hammer, RT Anvil and RT Saw; our Kontum-based CCC teams had state names, such as RT New York, RT Colorado and RT Montana. Da Nang-based CCN teams used snakes, like RT Anaconda, RT Asp and RT Sidewinder. However, there was a small degree of overlap.

HATCHET FORCES: The least-

often mentioned SOG combat elements were the Hatchet Forces, platoon and company-size reaction and raiding elements that conducted occasional raids and roadblock missions — some of them quite dramatic. These were SOG's equivalent of the 5th Special Forces Group's in-country Mike Forces.

PRAIRIE FIRE: This was not an operation, it was a theater of action, the code name for all SOG operations in Laos, originally designated Shining Brass. As well, when a team was so heavily engaged that it was in danger of being overrun, the team leader declared a "Prairie Fire Emergency," which gave his team priority for U.S. air strikes in Laos or Cambodia — diverting even dozens of bomb-laden planes to the team's support.

DANIEL BOONE: Likewise, SOG operations in Cambodia were called "Daniel Boone" until *Newsweek* magazine's "Washington Whispers" column compromised this code word in early 1969; overnight, Cambodia became "Salem House," which it remained until we ceased Cambodian operations in the summer of 1970.

NICKEL STEEL: To the best of my recollection, North Vietnam or DMZ targets north of the 17th parallel were designated Nickel Steel targets. American-led operations into North Vietnam-proper were rare, and were usually conducted to retrieve downed pilots before the enemy could capture them.

— J. P.

pursuers certain to follow.

Such a lead truck driver was especially valuable, intelligence analysts had determined, because he would be the enemy soldier most within reach to reveal — after capture — locations of hidden North Vietnamese truck parks, way stations and base camps in southern Laos — these would then become targets for B-52 strikes. Capturing such an enemy driver became one of SOG's highest-priority missions in early 1970.

But capturing any enemy soldier near the Ho Chi Minh Trail network was easy to talk about and hard to do. Not only was the region so heavily patrolled that just reaching a highway was a major achievement, but the North Vietnamese reaction forces were so large that escape with a slow-moving prisoner was wrought with danger.

While I was home on extension leave, the first Ashtray convoy ambush and POW-snatch mission was attempted. It was led by Major Frank Jaks, our S-3 who, though still youthful and vigorous, had in his teenage years been an anti-Nazi partisan in Yugoslavia. Although his handpicked, all-U.S. team successfully reached the highway and ambushed a convoy — destroying several trucks and inflicting heavy casualties — they had unintentionally killed the lead driver, returning empty-handed.



Chief of SOG, Col. James Cavanaugh, presented author with SOG pistol in July 1970, in recognition of his achievements during Mission Ashtray II. Photo: Author's collection

The Second Ashtray Mission

Although Jaks wanted to lead a second Ashtray mission, the Joint Chiefs judged him too knowledgeable to risk his capture a second time in Laos. There would be an entirely new perspective, a different approach; it was decided that Ashtray II

would involve a new group of men led by someone else. And much to my surprise, I was selected as team leader.

The mission would be a joint effort of my RT (Recon Team) California and RT New Hampshire, led by Fred Krupa. Although Krupa outranked me (I was a staff sergeant), this kind of "most-experienced-recon-man-leads" ethic was quite common in SOG.



To the victors go the spoils, of course, but the most cherished souvenirs of war are ones awarded by your comrades in arms. Photo: Author's collection

Ashtray II participants pose during pre-mission training: Left to right are Paul Kennicott, Charlie Septer (who coordinated air assets), author, and R. Michael Grace who wears SAS beret and carries a Swedish K. Photo: Author's collection



SOG was designated on paper as "Special Forces Augmentation" — in theory to the 5th Group whose men are shown here — but there was no operational relationship: SOG's next-higher was the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Photo: U.S. Army

WHAT WAS SOG ... REALLY?

Though its existence was concealed throughout the Vietnam War and even today its operations remain shrouded in secrecy, there once was a tiny, elite band of Green Berets who raised pandemonium behind North Vietnamese lines in Laos, Cambodia and even in North Vietnam itself. Slipping into the enemy's heavily defended base camps, conducting surveillance on enemy movements along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, planting mines to harass and confuse him, emplacing sensors to guide B-52 strikes, ambushing the enemy's convoys, snatching away his leaders for interrogation, wiretapping his phone system — these were typical, everyday SOG missions.

Yet, so sensitive were SOG missions that each one was approved on a case-by-case basis at the White House and Pentagon levels.

Concealed behind its innocuous abbreviation, MACV-SOG was one of the most effective special operations units in American military history.

Consider: Though SOG's tiny recon teams amounted to only about 50 U.S. personnel operating behind enemy lines at any one time, they tied down some 40,000 communist security troops who otherwise would have been free to operate in South Vietnam.

Consider: Though SOG's combat personnel never numbered more than about 500 — smaller even than a battalion — they included seven Medal of Honor recipients, undoubtedly the highest proportion in U.S. history.

Consider: Were the statistics assembled, it undoubtedly would be demonstrated that SOG recon had the highest percentage of Purple Hearts earned by members of any combat unit in our history. Virtually every man I knew was wounded; many were killed.

Consider: Though SOG was only a battalion-size project, 57 SOG soldiers were MIAs at the war's end, a sure indicator of the ever-present danger that stalked SOG troopers. But then also consider: In 1969, when we did an informal kill-ratio analysis, we found that for each SOG recon man killed, 117 enemy died, perhaps the highest such ratio in U.S. ground combat history.

But our own losses were horrific, with entire six-man SOG teams being overrun by forces dozens of times their size, or, even more hauntingly, entire teams mysteriously and ominously disappearing forever without the slightest trace of what became of them. Though I am a student of military history, I know of

no other situation in which American fighting men regularly found themselves evading bloodhounds and outwitting trackers to accomplish their missions. Or fending for themselves hundreds of miles from the nearest friendlies, with aerial support their only outside aid, and this in daytime only.

It's important to remember that these teams did accomplish their missions despite an incredible array of countermeasures implemented by a North Vietnamese army famed for its jungle warfare expertise. In fact, as author Al Santoli learned when interviewing a former North Vietnamese soldier, the enemy regarded these SOG warriors as America's finest jungle fighters.

Retired Colonel Henry Gole recently wrote in *Paramefers*, the Army War College magazine, that SOG recon men were "the bravest soldiers [he] met in three combat tours in two wars." And, in his memoirs, General William Westmoreland wrote much the same, praising these SOG troopers' "incredibly brave deeds."

Respect what was paid in blood for these enduring achievements: Glory is not merely fleeting — it is costly.

— J. P.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Reader,

We need your help in our nationwide survey. Will you please take a few moments of your time and fill out the bound in questionnaire and return to my attention.

The information requested will enable us to provide the type of magazine that you want. Therefore your answers are extremely valuable to us. Please fill out and return — no postage necessary. Thank you for your input! — RKB

1. How many years have you been a reader of *SOF*? (check only one).

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 year or less | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 to 7 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 to 14 years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 to 3 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 to 9 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15 years or more | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 to 5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

2. How many people read your copy? _____

3. Please indicate your opinion for each of the articles/features which appear in the Feb. 1993 issue of *SOF*. Did you feel the article and/or feature was very interesting, fairly interesting, slightly interesting, of no interest, or maybe you didn't read it?

Article/Feature	Page Number	Very Interesting	Fairly Interesting	Slightly Interesting	No Interest	Did Not Read
No Smoking Guns	28	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Afrikaans AK	30	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Along Bosnia's						
Ho Chi Minh Trail	36	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lost Linebackers	40	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scott Barnes	46					
Ripped Cloak,						
Rusty Dagger	52	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project Trigger Lock	56					
Body Heat	60	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stalking Poachers	62	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Regular Columns

Adventure Quartermaster	27	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bulletin Board	6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
World SitRep	16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FLAK	12	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Battle Blades	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full Auto	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. For the past ten years, *SOF* has had an incredible amount of negative publicity that has greatly contributed to a steady decline in both newsstand and subscription sales. Research has shown that non-readers would read a magazine that had the SAME editorial content as *SOF*, but when presented a copy of *SOF*, they change their opinion. If *SOF* were to change its name ONLY, which of the following would you like the most? (Check only one).

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Soldiers of Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> | Worldwide Military Review | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| The Professionals | <input type="checkbox"/> | Global Military Journal | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Do you or have you served in the military? Yes 27-1 No -2 (Skip to Question No.5)
If "yes" in what branch of service?

- | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Army | <input type="checkbox"/> | Coast Guard | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Navy | <input type="checkbox"/> | Marines | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Air Force | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (Specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

6. What is the State in which you live?
State: _____

7. What type of home is your main residence? (Check only one)

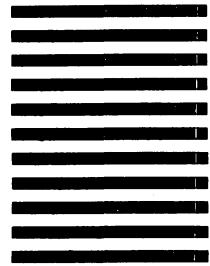
- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Own house, apartment, condo, co-op or mobile home | <input type="checkbox"/> | Rent Apartment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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SECOND FOLD DOWN ▼

8. **What is your sex?**

Male Female

9. **What is your age?**

Under 18 35-39 55-59
18-24 40-44 60-64
25-29 45-49 65 or older
30-34 50-54

10. **What is your marital status?**

Never married Widowed
Married Divorced or separated

11. **What is your present occupation?**

Law Enforcement Military (retired)
Military (active) Craftsman
Technical/Clerical/Sales Operative/Laborer
Professional/Managerial Other (Specify) _____

FIRST FOLD UP ▲

12. **What is the highest level of education you have attained? (Check one only)**

Some high school or less Graduated from 4-year college
High school graduate Some postgraduate study
Attended college less than 1 year Postgraduate degree
Attended college 1-3 years

13. **What is the total combined yearly income of all members of your household before taxes?**

Under \$10,000 \$30,000-\$34,999 \$55,000-\$59,999
\$10,000-\$14,999 \$35,000-\$39,999 \$60,000-\$74,999
\$15,000-\$19,999 \$40,000-\$44,999 \$75,000-\$99,999
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\$25,000-\$29,999 \$50,000-\$54,999

14. **Do you have any suggestions that might make SOF a better publication?** _____

Thank you very much for your answers. FOLD TWICE AND TAPE TO SEAL. DO NOT STAPLE.



Medal of Honor winner Franklin Miller photographed between firefights deep inside Laos, when author accompanied his team on mission. Miller was also awarded coveted SOG Silver Pistol. Photo: Author's collection

In addition to the four Americans on each team, we'd also bring along four Montagnard tribesmen as team members, for a total joint team of 12 — quite large since SOG recon teams usually employed only half this many men.

For three weeks we trained long and hard, worked out every last detail for the ambush, practiced drills for contact with the enemy and experimented with various demolition charges. And, of course, rehearsed that ambush over, and over,



Soviet-built GAZ-63 truck was ambushed on Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and its driver snatched by C&C SOG recon team. Note lashed bamboo camouflage on cab, and time-delay thermite grenade on hood, placed there by author. Photo: Author's collection

and over — both day and night. I was an unyielding taskmaster, but everyone understood so there wasn't the slightest gripe. These weren't unwilling draftees, but seasoned Special Forces soldiers — most on their second Vietnam combat tour — although several were new to SOG recon.

After briefing our plan to the chief of SOG in Saigon, he insisted that we run a short two-day recon of the area we'd flee through after the ambush, to ensure we wouldn't run right into a hidden enemy base camp. Krupa led this quick mission, which slipped in and out without incident while I finished other last-minute preparations. Two days later, our combined 12-man team was inserted by helicopter.

It took us three days of slow, silent movement to reach Highway 966E; this was a stealthy infiltration completed in the early afternoon of 29 March 1970, the day before Easter Sunday.

Night Ambush

After watching one truck dare to pass by in daylight, then laying in thick foliage until last light, we crept forward to the road. I emplaced three claymore mines linked together by det cord for simultaneous detonation; they were aimed in a semicircle to focus the blast on a

Continued on page 70



Staff Sergeant Richard Woody took AK rounds through both arms during the truck ambush, was medevaced stateside, and fully recovered. Photo: Author's collection

RIPPED CLOAK, RUSTY DAGGER

SOF Infiltrates Spyfest In Sofia

Text & Photos by Scott French

Imagine for a moment that you're James Bond and one day Miss Money Penny wakes you with the sad news that England has just surrendered to SPECTRE and, unfortunately, Her Majesty couldn't afford your gold watch ... good luck on your new career.

What do you do? Apply at the local grade school for a crossing guard job? Hire out to shake doorknobs? Flip burgers? Maybe you call a meeting with all your colleagues and, what the hell, your old enemies, too, to "redefine your goals" — in other words, find some new bad guys before it's too late.

I hate flying in Soviet aircraft. Hey, what do I know, maybe MiGs are wonderful planes, but this is my second time in a Tu-154, a Third World Xerox copy of a Boeing 727. Even with a shining new *Glasnost* paint job and some new upholstery I still don't like the beast. It feels flimsy, the seats are rickety and the cabin feels like it's held together only by the fresh paint.

In fact, I distinctly feel the need for a quick drink, but some fool has thoughtlessly misplaced the stewardess call button and there's not an angel of mercy in sight.

Finally we land in lovely Sofia, Bulgaria, at the invitation of something



called the Center for Democracy. This Washington-based think tank has some-how convinced spies from the KGB and from all the former Soviet-bloc East European countries to gather for a conference on "The Proper Role of an Intelligence Agency in a Democracy."

The guest list is impressive: former CIA chief William Colby, the president of Bulgaria and piles of spies ranging from 40-year KGB veterans to brand-new recruits of the emerging Albanian government.

Bulgaria is recovering from 40 years of communist dictatorship. Long lines of miserable Bulgarians waiting in the streets for basic foodstuffs are gone. Shop windows have clothing and meat proudly displayed. Fresh cucumbers, oranges, fruit juices and espresso are all available. Life is still a struggle for most Bulgarians, but they no longer seem to be starving or freezing.

I expect part of this trip's excitement to come from my day-to-day living arrangement — given the choice of a room



Above left: General Vadim Kirpichenko of the KGB and his colleagues are interested in supplementing their incomes by selling their memoirs to Hollywood. Above middle: Bulgaria's President Zhelyu Zhelev, a dead ringer for Mel Brooks, told gathered spies they are particularly qualified to help solve global problems like religious feuds, narco trafficking, illicit arms sales and illegal export of capital. Above right: Representative of new KGB: tailored suit, no 5-o'clock shadow, gregarious grin. *Is aware of job opportunities. Comrade?*

at the local Sheraton (\$187 per night for the only hotel around) or going through the Bulgarian tourist agency which, for the princely sum of \$4 per night in hard currency, will give me the key to a local's house and call and tell the landlord that a crazy writer from California is going to drop in for a few days.

Well, hopefully they'll call, because I don't speak a word of, ah, whatever they speak in Sofia and I don't relish the thought of explaining to the local authorities what I am doing in some woman's house at 1 a.m. After examining my finances carefully, I opt for the latter choice — hopefully they have room service.

The conference itself begins well. Although much of the country is crumbling, we participants in the spy jamboree are insulated from life on the streets of Sofia as we are whisked around in black Russian-built sedans by leather-jacketed Bulgarian agents with grim faces. They race through the streets without much regard for local traffic rules or local cops.

The conference opens in the Boyana government residence located at the foot of Mount Riga. Boyana is like a Hyatt Regency that has been closed to the public, a cavernous marble and glass resort catering only to official guests. It's devoid of signs or any indication of normal hotel

Spies R Us

KGB (Committee for State Security, former Soviet Union) — Formed an organization in order to sell "true stories" to writers and filmmakers and hired a Hollywood agent to represent them; opened doors of the famous Lubyanka (KGB headquarters and prison) to any tourist with \$25; contacted BBDO Worldwide Inc., one of the largest ad agencies in the United States, to "give them a new look" (the campaign was dropped after wits at the agency leaked ad mock-ups like "Not Your Father's KGB" to the press); canned a few agents and offered to teach counter-espionage to Western businessmen for a fee.

They now have their own public relations branch (which can be reached by calling Moscow 921-0762, ask for Andrei Oligov, director) and have opened a spy-for-hire section for any business that wants to use the KGB for "competitor research."

KGB chief General Vladimir Kryuchkov commented, "Monitoring business rivals should be right up the KGB's street." According to U.S. intelligence sources, they have increased funding for international operations and are specializing in industrial espionage. There are persistent rumors that some agents are selling their expertise to Arabic nations.

Stasi (Ministry for State Security, East Germany) — Most operatives were fired outright; some are offering private counterintelligence services; a few officers are overseeing a mountain of files. According to Hans-Gerhard Lange, a West German intelligence spokesman, there is a fair chance that many deep-cover Stasi are still meeting and operating to prevent the successful switch to a market economy.

Other East Bloc agencies — Most other ex-communist agencies are fighting to keep alive after budget cuts.

FREE-WORLD AGENCIES

SDECE (Service of External Documentation and Information, France) — You remember our pals, the French? They have, according to CIA director Robert Gates, "been caught spying on and stealing technology from several U.S. companies, including IBM and Texas Instruments."

NBC reported the French intelligence service has put agents on French flights to the United States disguised as stewards and stewardesses, routinely bugging the seats of American passengers.

CIA (Central Intelligence Agency, United States) — A former director of intelligence, Stansfield Turner, suggests the budget should be increased because we need to concentrate on the Persian Gulf states, on terrorist organizations and industrial espionage ("Imagine what help it would be in international trade negotiations to know precisely what the other side is doing. The United States does not want to be surprised by such worldwide developments as technological breakthroughs ... or unfair economic practices."). Turner also suggests that we need to closely watch the former Soviets' nuclear arsenal.

One of his replacements, Richard Kerr, flatly denies the CIA is getting into industrial espionage. No one, however, denies the CIA has shifted its recruiting strategies and is now concentrating on businessmen, scientists and linguists.

— S. F.

Kirpichenko tells me one of his proudest moments: selling his trench coats to a popular British writer

commerce; it's just filled with meeting halls, restaurants and bedrooms.

There is one store in the complex offering an illogical selection of trinkets, yet exceptionally well-stocked with Bulgarian-made trench coats. A special run for the spy gathering? The clerk didn't say, but I bought a stylish double-breasted model in navy blue for a bargain \$22.

We assemble for the opening sessions — dozens of spies, a handful of journalists and a sprinkling of politicians. Bulgarian President Zhelyu Zhelev appears for the official welcome. A dead ringer for Mel Brooks, Zhelev runs down the stock list of troubles facing the post-Cold-War world: national passions, religious feuds, narco trafficking, illicit arms sales and illegal exports of capital.

"These global problems," the president told the attentive spies, "can be solved and the people gathered here — the specialized intelligence services — are particularly qualified" for the challenge.

Yes, this concept seems to have struck a responsive chord in the audience. *Well hell, let's stop following each other around and get those no-good SOBs that are laundering money and generally terrorizing the population. Hey, William's dad has a barn, I've got some costumes, George has a gun, let's put on a show.* But the program is only half the fun — the participants themselves are quite a trip. One of my favorites is KGB General Vadim Kirpichenko. No REMF here, Vadim has been out in the streets doing things to the bad guys; well, us in this case, but all that is in the past — we've got more important fish to fry now.

Kirpichenko personifies the Russian bear. He is big, he is bold and I'm not sure I'd want to have an overly serious discussion with him on a subject we couldn't agree on. Which is why I'm a little nonplussed when he asks me for my card "in case I don't like what you write about me." He also tells me one of his proudest moments was when he was killed off in a book by a popular British writer of spy fiction.

Some of Kirpichenko's best moments come not at the conference itself, but at the nightly cocktail parties where he holds court and seems to enjoy the attention a 40-year KGB veteran would expect to attract at a spy convention.

"So what are the KGB going to do for a living, now that we're all such good buddies?" I ask him.

Well, it turns out one thing they're going to do is sell their stories to "inter-

ested parties" via the new Foreign Intelligence Veterans Association, a group of KGB officers that has banded together to market their wares in the West.

How to Market A Spy

I'm not 100% sure I understand this concept. The Soviet Union, or former Sovs' top generals in the committee for state security marketing their histories to Hollywood? Is that what the general means?

"It's not the selling of secrets," he assures me emphatically when I ask if this offer includes classified Soviet Material. After all, today's KGB agents need to supplement their meager ruble salaries. Not true, insists Kirpichenko. He and his colleagues are only interested in selling their memoirs. "Of course a control system must exist. Those memoirs should not divulge state secrets." The KGB leadership will decide what is OK to write.

Kirpichenko downs another bite of hors d'oeuvre, another slug of vodka, then muses about his own autobiography: "I think it would be possible to tell a lot of interesting and useful stories. I want to show that people of high intellect work in Russian intelligence, that the work is clean without any force pressing."

The general apologizes for his English, which is quite adequate, noting he prefers to speak through an interpreter. He's proud of his facility with French and Arabic, and mocks American diplomats ("diplomat" being spy jargon for another spy) for being too lazy to learn foreign languages.

The KGB is going to sell its material to Hollywood. Good Lord, the system seems to be working after all. Why didn't someone think of this in World War II? Kirpichenko (and later, William Colby) makes an effort to differentiate between spying and simple intelligence gathering.

The legend of the James Bond agent is not debunked, just de-emphasized.

"Usually agents give concrete details, but not the general picture," the experienced Russian explained. "Agents cannot give a complete picture, only a group of analysts can do that — work that is 10 times more valuable than an agent's."

A Traitor Is Still A Traitor

Kirpichenko flared only when asked about KGB agents who sold out the Soviet Union and worked as double agents.

"A traitor in all cases," the general said with disgust. It mattered not at all to him that Russia and America are no longer adversaries. "It was money," he spat out his assessment of what motivated the turncoats, "not like cooperation for an idea. These people did not own the intelligence. They ran from their children and parents. They ran from their wives with their lovers. That was an immoral act. The cases of cooperation for an ideal, there were very few cases like that."

Ah, not that he was above recruiting for his own service. Kirpichenko turned to me with his winning smile.

"For example, if I

offer you a deal, it is your free will to cooperate. It is not known to authorities. This is normal, cooperation of a citizen with foreign intelligence."

Cold War or not, some habits apparently die hard.

My very favorite spy, however, is Iraqi Kocollari, the new president of the Albanian Intelligence Committee. Kocollari is a young fellow with an easy smile who is a prime example of the crunch in the spy-vs.-spy business. He drove to the conference from Tirana in his new Fiat, dodging a war along the way. You see, the poor Albanian government had no *leks* in the budget to send him on an airplane.

Still, Kocollari seems quite excited



During Stalinist era, Bulgarian Ruen Krumov, now 78, was arrested, interrogated for 15 days and told repeatedly he must confess to being an American agent. Although he confessed nothing, he spent five years imprisoned.

ents was when he was killed off in a book by a riter of spy fiction.

about the whole idea of the conference: mixing with the big guys, listening to war stories, parking his new Fiat at the curb in front of some of the toughest guys in the world.

This attitude will wear somewhat thin three days later when some enterprising Bulgarian, eager to try his hand at this new concept of capitalism, steals this very Fiat from under the noses of our machine-gun-toting guards and Kocollari is forced to call his embassy and plead for airfare to return home. But I'm getting ahead of the story.

The Intelligence Committee is a new organization, replacing the dreaded *Sigurimi* secret police of the old communist regime. "Sigurimi was on the front line of the fight against citizens," Kocollari said, explaining why the old force was completely disbanded.

Kocollari's years of communist schooling crept into his phraseology: "Since it was part of the state structure, Sigurimi played its own role defending the dictatorial clique. It was a tool in the hands of the party-state to safeguard the party's life and interest." He is disgusted as he talks about his predecessor: "It was a censor of free thought, free speech and free actions."

Jack London, Walt Whitman & the KGB

But what Kocollari really likes to talk about is American literature. He loves Jack London's stories, and Walt Whitman is his favorite poet. A literate spy ... my kind of guy.

The United States sent regrets that the current CIA director was too busy to attend, but it did send William Colby, ex-agency director who turned out to be the star of the conference.

Colby also takes a part at the cocktail parties. One of his best raps is explaining the difference between intelligence gathering and spying. "Before you spy," Colby tells an attentive Bulgarian agent at the American ambassador's party, one must ask oneself three questions: *Is what you are trying to learn really important? What are risks of exposure? Finally, what will the likely effect be when you are exposed — because you eventually will be.*

"For example," Colby summed up, "I would never spy on Canada. They are too good a friend. If you want to know something about Canada, just ask a Canadian."

The Bulgarian loved the lesson, but he was worried about his own professional value now that the Cold War was officially declared over. "But we do still have

enemies," he implored Colby, "terrorists and drug lords."

Colby cautiously responded, "You must know how important the threat is before you spy."

At this point the Bulgarian was almost pleading his case. It was an odd exchange to witness; the three of us in the ambassador's residence sharing gin and smoked salmon, with the Bulgarian worrying about his gig. Finally he burst out with his final question: "There is still a justification for us to exist, isn't there? I mean, the terrorists and the drug lords?"

"Absolutely," Colby poured on the charm, "but you don't need thousands of people. If you're a regional country, you just need to look at your border."

The former bad-guy Bulgarian was soaking it all up and nodding. "We are in a state of shock," he explained. "We are ready to talk." He was obviously enthralled with the idea of meeting Colby. "You are the greatest!" he announced.

Colby just smiled. After all, his side won this particular war.

Storing Secrets

Oddly enough, one of the major problems facing New World spies is what to do with all that secret stuff collected by the Old World spies. Of course democracy is wonderful, but there should still be some way to keep all those secrets compiled by the past regimes.

Alfred Einweg came to the conference representing Germany. He holds the government title of "data protection commissioner." His job supposedly is designed to ensure that German citizens enjoy fair access to files of the *Stasi* (East German secret police) just opened to the public. Now remember, the *Stasi* were rumored to be some of the most ruthless and effective spies in the biz.

Einweg holds himself sternly as he

walks and talks. His face is molded into a frown; a monocle would not look out of place, but when he speaks about the files there is no hint of Prussian militarism.

Instead he worries about rights and about ruined lives.

"In principle" Einweg explains, "all Germans now have the right to inspect their files. But," he laughs, "the intelligence services can have an overriding interest."

This overriding interest means the files stay sealed unless various safeguards, Einweg himself being the last, are overridden, so don't make big plans for that visit to your personal file, democracy or not.

The commissioner soberly talks about the husband who learned from his file that his wife had been a *Stasi* informant, about destroyed careers and suicides because of *Stasi* records made public. More than one of the "soldiers" who shot fellow Germans when they tried to cross the wall have run with their tails between their legs to Moscow. Moscow is talking [as this is being written] about turning them over.

As data protection commissioner, Einweg acts as a go-between. When a German wants to see his file and the government says the file must remain closed, Einweg can take a look at the paperwork and then report back to the frustrated citizen. "I cannot say what is in the files. I can only tell them 'your rights were violated' or 'your rights were not violated,'" he noted.

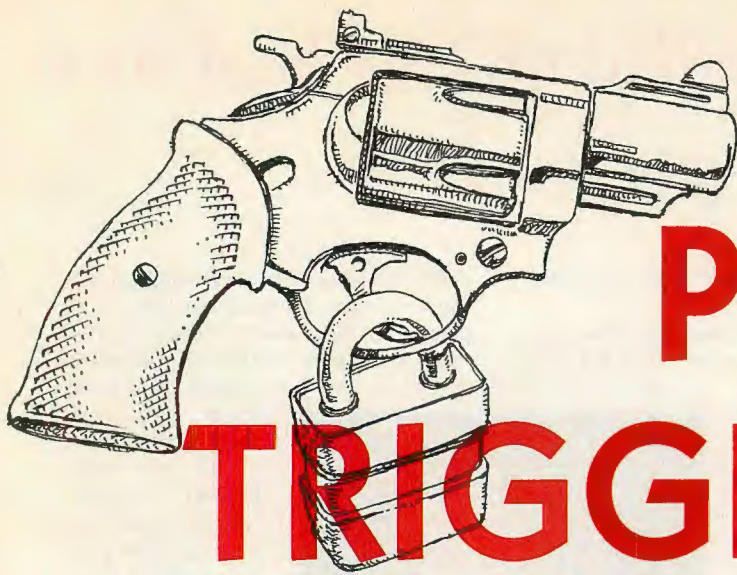
Since Germany "opened" the *Stasi* files, other former communist states are watching the results before making their own decisions. Einweg sees several contradictions in the mechanism Germany has set up for dealing with requests to see the records.

"If a citizen wants information, he must say why," explains Einweg, shaking his



William Colby became the star of the conference — possibly because old spies were hoping for hints on how to make a living in a post-Cold War world.

Continued on page 64



PROJECT TRIGGERLOCK

“Big Lou” Samuels is not your model citizen. Twenty-five of his 40 arrests since 1975 have been for a poisonous cornucopia of violent crime: an ice-pick stabbing, several firearms assaults — one leaving the victim permanently paralyzed — five rapes, including one of an 11-year-old girl, along with threatening unlucky witnesses to his crimes.

One of Big Lou’s more recent raps was for felony riot in 1986, a shoot-out in which his drug gang exchanged more than 100 rounds of automatic weapons fire with rival merchants of death. Seven people, including an uninvolved 14-year-old pregnant bystander, were wounded.

Samuels’ sentence? Fourteen years. Actual time served? Just over three years.

Back on the street, Big Lou was bored and soon in trouble again, this time for repeatedly raping an 18-year-old woman at gunpoint. To Samuels, the gun he used may have seemed like just another tool of the criminal trade, an incidental part of another day in a life of crime.

This was before Samuels heard the word “Triggerlock.” It would eventually ring in his ears with the finality of a Big House cell door clanging shut for a long, long time.

The state of North Carolina nailed Samuels on the rape charge. But his toughest punishment — 45 years in federal prison without parole — was imposed under strict federal gun laws for being a “career criminal” and convicted felon in possession of a gun. Big Lou is on ice.

The BATF, in conjunction with other government agencies, initiates program to put armed felons behind bars for a long time. But are gun-owners’ rights again being trampled in the name of law enforcement?

by James L. Pate

Illustrations: Ralph Butler

The goal of “Project Triggerlock” is to prosecute violent career criminals and felons carrying guns under federal gun laws — requiring mandatory federal penalties ranging from 10 years to life in prison without parole — sentences that must be served consecutive to any other penalties. It began as part of the Bush administration’s anti-crime crusade, administered by the U.S. Department of Justice and spearheaded by the Department of the Treasury through its Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms.

Each of the nation’s 94 U.S. Attorney offices has a specially designated Triggerlock prosecutor to work with BATF field agents in making cases. And every federal firearms prosecution now automatically becomes a Triggerlock case.

While these career criminals can be

prosecuted under state laws for more serious offenses than federal gun violations, such as cases of rape or murder, they — like Samuels had in the past — often win early release from state prisons due to overcrowding or because of more lenient parole systems.

Big Lou’s case is one of the striking success stories of Project Triggerlock touted in a July 1992 report to President Bush, *Project Triggerlock: Incarcerating the Armed Career Criminal*.

“Taking Up The Slack” On Gun Control

The report, a first-year assessment, marks the government’s first detailed explanation of Project Triggerlock. Former Attorney General Richard Thornburgh announced Triggerlock on 10 April 1991, but he provided few details except to say it would focus on firearms violations by repeat violent offenders, adding that long prison sentences without paroles would be sought.

Thus, Thornburgh explained, Triggerlock would “take up the slack” while Congress debated the Brady Bill for gun control.

The Brady Bill failed to pass. Still, figures compiled in a BATF report indicate Triggerlock racked up some impressive statistics in its first year: Federal firearms prosecutions more than doubled between 1 May 1991 and 30 April 1992. One out of every 10 federal prosecutions now involves firearms charges, the BATF report stated. Armed “career criminals” like Samuels (those with an extensive history of armed violent crime) were sentenced to an average 18 years without parole in federal prisons. Eighty-four percent of the 6,454 defendants indicted under Project Triggerlock in its first year

were drug dealers or violent felons in possession of a firearm, according to BATF figures.

Support for Project Triggerlock seems broad-based: "Federal courts are needed to prosecute repeat offenders because prison terms are not stiff enough under state law," said Sacramento's deputy district attorney, Dale E. Kitching.

With the feds involved, "the defendant ... is arrested, tried and convicted in the federal system oftentimes before a state defendant gets to the state superior court for arraignment," according to Paul Brodeur, chief of detectives for Manchester, New Hampshire. One Triggerlock defendant, Gary Lewis Davis, "will spend more time in federal prison for drug and weapon violations than he will in state prison for killing a man three years ago." *The Charlotte Observer* reported.

Despite positive press and impressive statistics — and the laudable goal of putting violent criminals behind bars for as long as possible — Triggerlock's apparent early success has not gone

unquestioned: "Triggerlock will make a bad situation impossible," said Chief Judge Judith N. Keep of the U.S. District Court for Southern California. Citing routine drug and gun cases already accounting for 70% of her court's time, she expressed concern that BATF agents would pack federal courts with minor violations to generate high case-load statistics.

Sergeant Mike Flory, chief narcotics investigator for the Statesville, North Carolina, Police Department and a strong advocate of Project Triggerlock, already sees a saturation point coming in the federal courts. Triggerlock assistance "works real well when we use it," Flory told *Soldier Of Fortune*. "But it's getting bogged down because [federal courts] can only take so many cases."

Calling Project Triggerlock "the Bush administration's latest superficial approach to violent crime," the *San Jose Mercury News* — a solid proponent for stricter gun controls — editorialized that "instead of helping the states deal with their crushing criminal case loads and overcrowded prisons, the administration would overwhelm

the federal courts and prisons, too."

The federal prison system has kept pace so far, but not without cost to the taxpayer. From 1981 to fiscal year 1992, the federal Bureau of Prisons increased its budget 470%. Inmate capacity grew 44% in the last three years. But money is not the only cost, some critics attest.

Still, "the very mission of the federal judicial system is at stake," the *Mercury News* editorial claimed. "It's not that drug offenders who shoot don't belong in prison. They do. But by ignoring the core problems of state judicial systems, the White House merely plays a shell game with prison cells."

Curiously, while Triggerlock has been criticized by advocates of stricter gun control like the *Mercury News*, it also has garnered cautiously qualified support from such unexpected quarters as the National Rifle Association.

"Overall [it] is a good idea," said Richard Gardiner, the NRA's legal counsel. "But [BATF] is not necessarily using it wisely. I believe their primary object is to build up impressive statistics. For instance,



there are some cases [that], while strictly speaking, fit the criteria ... that probably are not the best cases for prosecution" because the defendant's criminal record is not recent or does not include violent crimes.

Yet any federal firearms prosecution automatically becomes a Triggerlock case, the Justice Department report noted.

BATF "should be focusing on people with convictions for recent violent crimes," Gardiner said. "So, to the extent that resources are used to prosecute recent violent felons, we applaud their efforts."

Indeed, U.S. District Judge G. Kendall Sharp of the Middle District of Florida complained that some initial Triggerlock investigations were "piddly stuff ... not big cases." He threw out one such case because a Triggerlock prosecutor filed a minor charge three years after the fact against a defendant already serving a life term in a state prison.

Triggerlock is just "another move to make the federal government look effective when it's ineffective on the crime-fighting front," charged federal defender Arthur W. Rubenbeck of New York. "What's the federal interest in bringing all these nickel-and-dime cases into federal court?"

Bureaucratic Gun Control Policy?

A former assistant U.S. attorney in Tulsa, Oklahoma, one who has prosecuted cases investigated by the BATF, thinks he knows the answer to Rubenbeck's question.

Keith Ward views Triggerlock as an attempt by federal law-enforcement agencies, especially the BATF, to "impose a bureaucratic gun-control policy that can't be effected in Congress."

"Such an agenda is troublesome," noted Ward, who recently defended a Triggerlock suspect, "not only because it violates the separation of powers doctrine, but also because its ostensible goal is the elimination of private ownership of firearms. When you strip away the hype and the rhetoric, Project Triggerlock is a campaign ploy and a colossal waste of taxpayer money."

The government's one-year status report on Triggerlock, which contains no data reflecting case dispositions, acknowledges "it is too soon to assess

either the deterrent effect or the overall crime reduction achieved ... " As of 31 August 1992, half of the suspects indicted under Triggerlock have been convicted. But not everyone indicted has been tried.

Because of BATF's past use of underhanded enforcement tactics, and because of allegations of the bureau's pursuing easy-to-prove technical violations while actually ignoring more-serious criminals, questions about Triggerlock's real effectiveness likely will persist (*see*

drug-trafficking networks and violent gangs, which have spawned much of the violence on our streets [and] often operate across state and even international boundaries," according to the report. Other factors include overcrowded state prisons and the increasing financial and manpower limitations on local law enforcement.

Project Triggerlock is an outgrowth of another BATF interagency task-force project called "Achilles," which applies federal prosecution to firearms violations

by 20 specially funded teams in cities with high crime rates.

The Achilles program is one in a plethora of such task forces involving the BATF, including the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, the BATF/FBI Gang Task Force and the U.S. Marshal Service's "Operation Gunsmoke."

"The typical Triggerlock case involves simple felon-in-possession prosecutions," Ward noted. "Such cases are among the most basic, easy-to-prove cases possible. In state courts, one experienced prosecutor could easily handle hundreds of such cases per year.

"In today's economic climate, when virtually every citizen wants to see reductions in government spending, it would appear that the federal government is spending tens of millions of dollars to hire and equip additional prosecutors, and to house felons-in-possession [of firearms] who ought to be housed in state-run prisons.

"Gun-owners, gun dealers and police are united in their belief that criminals who use guns ... should be sent to jail for long periods of time," Ward said. "However, the current trend [under Triggerlock] also has the effect of putting law-abiding citizens in jail for exercising their right to bear arms — a right that is guaranteed under

the United States Constitution and by acts of Congress."

With Significant Deviations

Moreover, Ward alleged that "significant deviations from the policies announced by the Department of Justice are occurring in the Northern District of Oklahoma." Instead of major repeat felons, Ward said more innocent, law-abiding gun owners like John Lawmaster have had their houses ransacked, their personal property confiscated or destroyed and their

accompanying sidebar).

Triggerlock A Boon For Local Lawmen

There is no question that Project Triggerlock is a resource bonanza for overworked local lawmen. It cites two reasons for the feds (mainly the BATF, but also the FBI, U.S. Marshal Service and the Drug Enforcement Administration) to adopt higher local law-enforcement profiles.

One is the growth of "sophisticated



SENATE-TARGETED BATF ABUSES

Project Triggerlock's ultimate success may depend on close congressional monitoring of the BATF's performance, the bureau's history suggests. Created in 1972 from the former Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms Division, the BATF emerged as a semi-autonomous agency no longer controlled by the Internal Revenue Service.

Like all bureaucracies, the new BATF had to justify its existence with numbers. It was easier — and safer — to do so by piling up technical violations committed by law-abiding citizens than it was to go after more serious — and dangerous — offenders. Constituent complaints, including those of two federal prosecutors in Illinois who groused that they had been "totally unable to persuade BATF to accept cases against felons in possession of firearms," culminated in hearings by different congressional committees and subcommittees from 1978 until 1982.

The Constitution Subcommittee of the Senate's judiciary panel, which published its findings in February 1982, laid much of the blame for the BATF's investigative abuses on the Gun Control Act of 1968. The BATF's "enforcement tactics ... are constitutionally, legally and practically reprehensible," the subcommittee report concluded. "Although Congress adopted the Gun Control Act with the primary object of limiting access of felons ... to firearms, the overbreadth of the law has led to neglect of precisely this area of enforcement."

The BATF's own statistics were damning, according to the subcommittee's report, which noted that the bureau "has primarily devoted its firearms enforcement efforts to the apprehension [on] technical ... charges of individuals who lack all criminal intent and knowledge." The number of cases involving arrests of felons in possession of guns or of those knowingly selling to felons as of 1982 had dropped from 14% to 10% of the BATF's case load.

"Agents anxious to generate an impressive arrest and gun confiscation quota have repeatedly enticed gun collectors into making a small number of sales — often as few as four — from their personal collections," the Senate report noted. "Although each of the sales was completely legal under federal and state law, the agent then charged the collector with having 'engaged in the business' of dealing guns without a license."

Further, the report continued, agents then "confiscated the entire collection of the potential defendant ... even in cases where the collectors secured acquittal, or grand juries failed to indict, or prosecutors refused to file charges ... In several cases, the agent has refused to return the collection, even after acquittal by jury."

Because the law does not provide a defendant the right to recover attorney's fees, someone who had already spent thousands of dollars proving his innocence suddenly faced the prospect of spending thousands more in civil litigation to recover a legal gun collection.

"This, of course, has given [BATF] enormous bargaining power in refusing to return confiscated firearms," the Senate report added. "Bureau agents have tended to concentrate upon [expensive] collector's items rather than 'criminal street guns.'"

BATF was also chastised for changing its statutory interpretations of regulations, changes in interpretation that were not published in the *Federal Register* as required by law. Another sneaky tactic involved agents advising dealers that it was legal for an adult to buy for a minor. But agents failed to tell dealers that such a "straw man" purchase hinged on fine technical and legal distinctions that had not been publicized — agents then organized several buy-and-bust stings.

The trickery came to light in South Carolina, where 37 dealers lost their licenses, with several cited as convicted felons. When a judge told BATF agents the dealers had "not been fairly treated" and refused further prosecutions until notification was made, "Bureau officials were careful to inform only the dealers [in South Carolina] and even then complained in internal memoranda that this was interfering with the creation of cases," the Senate report declared.

After the BATF was told to print a regulatory warning on the front of transfer forms, the report mentioned how the BATF "instead placed the warning in fine print on the back of the form, thus further concealing it from the dealer's sight."

Another unpublished regulation, that dealers keep records on any occasional sale from their private collections, was used to concoct more arrest data. BATF's former director wrote to one senator that such personal sales by dealers need not be recorded, after prosecution of such cases began. Later, after admitting that such unrecorded transactions were illegal, the director was quoted in a magazine interview "read primarily by licensed firearm dealers as stating that such sales were ... legal."

The Senate panel's report cited the BATF as guilty of not only violating "the dictates of common sense," but also the federal law banning "secret lawmaking" by administrative bodies. "These practices ... leave little doubt that [the BATF] has disregarded rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the laws of the United States."

— J. L. P.

constitutional rights trampled by "overzealous" BATF agents (See "Gun Gestapo," June '92).

As in the Lawmaster raid, the BATF offered no apology for the apparently unwarranted search of a home near Colville, Washington, in April 1991 where a heavily armed 23-man team led by the BATF searched the home of Del Knudson looking for allegedly illegal firearms. Like the Lawmaster raid, the incident turned into a public-relations fiasco in which the BATF reportedly used intimidation tactics reminiscent of the Gestapo.

While Knudson's wife was isolated by agents in a room, the couple's frightened 6-year-old daughter was restrained from joining her mother. Melissa Knudson told Colville's *Statesman-Examiner* newspaper. Another daughter just 21 months old was left unattended in the bathtub, the mother added. A concerned neighbor who came over offering to assist with the children

was handcuffed for the duration of the three-hour raid.

Three rifles and some miscellaneous parts misidentified by BATF agents were confiscated from the Knudsons, only to be returned a couple weeks later without apology or explanation. No charges filed; no arrests made.

"We ... were told that what happened to us was a 'small inconvenience' — 'this happens once in a while,' they said — and we should get on with our lives," Mrs. Knudson told the *Statesman-Examiner*.

Still other deviations from the stated intentions of Project Triggerlock have occurred, Ward observed. Despite initial government assertions that no plea bargains would be allowed, he noted that federal prosecutors "have entered into ... plea agreements with ... police [in] various Oklahoma cities who the federal government have targeted under Project Triggerlock and accused of violating

federal firearms laws."

Ward was referring to the case of William Hugh Fleming, who is licensed to buy, sell, import and manufacture machine guns and weapons of mass destruction. Defended by Ward, Fleming was convicted on two counts of making false statements on BATF paperwork and on one count of conspiring to make a false statement. The two main witnesses against Fleming were local lawmen who were themselves targets of this BATF investigation (and of others) and who cut a deal with BATF to escape prosecution.

Ward said Project Triggerlock was "used in this instance as a facade to prosecute someone with no prior criminal record — an honest, legitimate firearms dealer with an unblemished past who is licensed by the United States government to do exactly what the government indicted

Continued on page 69

BODY HEAT

New IR Detector Sees Into The Night

Text & Photos by Galen Geer

Throughout history, men have sought methods to see in the dark. Human eyes are frail and limited — they can't see into darkness and shadows where danger often waits. Everything from torches to starlight scopes has been part of man's effort to push back the night.

The best equipment we've got, the sort of technology that made our Persian Gulf victory seem so easy, isn't cheap. The average foot soldier didn't have access to the newest technology — he still had to rely on his eyes and instincts at night. Street cops and security officers have had the same problem. Night-vision technology has been too expensive.

Now this situation is finally changing. Game Finder, a small Alabama company, is marketing an infrared radiation (IR) detector that bridges this financial chasm between the grunt and the most advanced technology.

The Game Finder was originally developed by a laid-back inventor to help out a friend who hunts raccoons in the Alabama woods.

"The hunter's coon dogs were barking up the wrong trees," Game Finder's president, Jerry Bonner, told *Soldier Of Fortune*. "The guy asked his friend why someone couldn't come up with something that would locate the raccoons in trees."

A few days later, according to Bonner, the inventor handed the coon hunter the very first Game Finder. The hunter took it to the field and it worked.

The original detector was about the same size as a flashlight and cost less than most 35mm cameras; the second-generation Game Finder is an easier-to-handle, flat-bottomed design that is a thousand times more sensitive than the original and costs about \$300.

I learned about the Game Finder during the January '92 SHOT Show in New Orleans and was subsequently able to get one of the devices for a field test. I wrote on the first-generation Game Finder in

SOF (See "Geer on Gear," July '92) and we tried out one of these early units while hunting and on antipoaching operations in Africa, with excellent results.

At first, the surprisingly simple operation of the unit belies its effectiveness. All objects emit heat in the form of infrared radiation, or IR. Turn the Game Finder on and move it back and forth in the direction of a ground area to be searched. The unit's bar-graph display lights will go on when a temperature change is detected.

Two Sensors

Key to the Game Finder's success are two sensors that constantly compare temperatures in their fields of view. A temperature difference as small as 1 degree between the two sensors will cause one light to be lit; a large change of several degrees, such as that sensed from a human being compared to the surrounding terrain, will cause all 10 lights to be lit.

Each sensor sees a rectangular "window." At 100 feet, the window, or field of view, for the unit represents 13 feet in width by 9 feet in height. If you divide the field of view into three equal vertical windows, then each sensor sees an area slightly less than 4.5 feet wide and 9 feet tall. The window grows larger as range increases: At 100 yards, the window is 36 feet wide by 27 feet tall; at 1,000 yards the window is 130 yards wide by 120 yards tall.

The sensors see the two outside windows; the middle window is empty. For the user to determine whether something is out there, the unit is scanned across an area and the sensors light up the bar graph when any difference in temperature is detected between the outside windows.

To locate the position of a heat source, move the unit back and forth in a sweeping motion. Each time the bar graph lights up, note the position relative to the terrain on the left-to-right, and on the right-to-left scan. If the source is moving each time the sensors sweep over it, then the relative position of illumination during the sweep

will be changed.

If the unit is held in one position for a few seconds, all lights will go off. For example, if you were aiming the Game Finder at an animal and left the unit stationary for a few seconds, the lights would go off. When the animal began moving, it would be indicated by the lights going on and off again.

An adjustment on top of the unit allows its user to use the "Gain Control" feature to adjust sensitivity of the unit to the particular type of environment you're in. For example, if you're searching for a man in an otherwise empty building, you don't want to be bothered with small changes in temperature. You can set the gain control to react only to larger changes in temperature.

The range of the Game Finder varies depending on conditions. I tested the first unit to a range of nearly 500 yards and was able to locate an individual deer on a piñon-covered hillside. In another nighttime test, we tracked a man walking more than one block away.

Al Starnier, an occasional contributor to *SOF*, had to use a 250,000-candlepower red light to locate jackrabbits hidden more than 50 yards from us in his southern Colorado vineyard. Yet the Game Finder easily picked them up despite their being hidden in weeds.

Law Enforcement Uses

A variety of organizations have realized the potential for the Game Finder and are developing programs to make the best possible use of the new technology.

Iowa law-enforcement officials have implemented a qualification program for the device; similar units are being tested by every major federal law-enforcement agency, as well as by selected military units. In the next few years the hand-held IR device may become as common as binoculars.

Allen Cooper, a southern Colorado police officer, took *SOF*'s test unit on patrol.

At one point, when Cooper was inside a discount store checking on an after-hours alarm, he was able to use the detector to scan for anyone hiding.

Cooper suggested to Game Finder's president that the position of the light bar at the back of the unit made it somewhat awkward to use in a tactical situation. Bonner corrected that problem when he redesigned the unit so the light bar is now on top of the unit and set at an angle that can be seen from different eye levels.

Law enforcement has long needed a compact, easy-to-use device to allow officers vision into dark areas where they have traditionally used flashlights (which exposed their positions) or just gut instincts. The Game Finder gives officers an edge.

Another police application is in tactical room-clearing operations. "While one officer scans for IR signatures that would indicate a person in the room, the other can be backing him up," Cooper noted.

I used the original Game Finder in Africa on antipoaching patrols in the Kangwane Parks region near Swaziland. African game scouts were able to quickly master the unit and will begin using it in the field.

Military, Hunting, Or Search & Rescue

Military applications for a Game Finder device are numerous. On patrol, the point man can use the detector to scan ahead for possible ambush while security forces can be looking into the shadows for infiltrators or to provide early warning of advancing troops, rather than relying on trip flares or booby traps.

House-to-house operations can be made safer as well with an IR device used to scan a room for heat sources before a full entry. There will never again be a reason for a foot soldier to be blind at night.

As for sportsmen, for whom this device was originally designed, the Game

Simple operation of unit belies its effectiveness. Two sensors so sensitive they pick up a single degree of temperature change are central to Game Finder's success.



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Galen Geer is SOF's Outdoor Affairs Editor.

STALKING POACHERS

SOF On Intercept Op In South African Bush

Text & Photos by Galen Geer

I was packed. My ride to Nelspruit was in the office of the Songimvelo game reserve where the Gold Fields Training Center was located, and I was sitting in the shade — waiting.

I had spent three days with Clive Poultney, training officer for the center, and his lovely wife Jeanné learning about the training of game scouts and the poaching wars of South Africa's homelands. A parks director, Dr. Jeremy Anderson, had arranged for my visit with Poultney to coincide with *Soldier Of Fortune's* African Safari last spring.

SOF's Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown and Contributing Editor John Donovan were still hunting at Caskett's

Ranch (See "Luck Of The Hunt," Oct. '92.).

Now Poultney came out of the game reserve office, grinning. "Too bad you're going back so soon," he said.

"Why?" I asked.

"We've got an op."

"What is it?"

"Intelligence has evidence that poachers are going to cross the fence into a reserve near Nelspruit and Kruger Park to poach a rhino," Poultney said. "We're putting teams on the water holes of the reserve to ambush them."

I wanted to go, and asked what the chances of contact were. "Difficult to say, but we do know the poachers have AKs,"

Poultney replied. Brown was expecting me back; he would have to wait.

While I faxed a memo to Brown about my delay, Poultney arranged official permission from Anderson for me to join the operation. I would have to carry my own kit; Poultney was told to give me a familiarization-fire course on the South African LIW R4 assault rifle.

One hour later on a makeshift range, I convinced Poultney I could handle the R4, then we returned to the center to organize a special team of scouts headed by Sergeant Elvis Siphon Mkhonto.

Poultney briefed his team. They would draw rations for the operation and be issued R4s and ammo. After dark they would be taken to the temporary range and go through a night-fire refresher course, then return to the barracks. It was emphasized that they were not to talk to anyone about the operation.

That night Poultney, Jeanné and I talked about the operation. Jeanné was faced with the prospect that her husband would likely be in a firefight within a few hours. "The poachers have got to be stopped," she said, "but who stops the men behind the poachers, the men who put up the money that buys the horns? If someone is killed, aren't they guilty of murder?"

These were interesting questions: Maybe someday solutions would be determined. But the only immediate answers Poultney and his scouts needed involved accurate intelligence and whether the poachers would surrender or fight.

Next morning we drove to the Parks Corp. offices in Nelspruit. The scouts were shuffled upstairs, issued their ammunition, given lunch and told to wait. Hunting

Sgt. Mkhonto deploys his team of game scouts near a watering hole to ambush poachers that local intelligence reported were heading their way.



TRAINING AT GOLD FIELDS

To win a war, you must train. In the hills of the Songimvelo Game Reserve, operated by the Kangwane Parks Corp., small groups of men are being trained to win the war against poaching. Clive Poultney, a former South African Defense Force infantry officer who trains these men, is determined to instill confidence and a drive for excellence in them to keep them alive in the bush and help turn the tide of the poaching war.

"These men can quit any time," Poultney told me, "but most of them don't. They stay with it. Some for the job, others because they want to become part of the parks system."

Whatever reasons motivate men to attend the school, once there they are introduced to a rigid military training program including morning PT, inspections, close-order drill, firearms training, first aid training, patrolling techniques, and hours upon hours of classroom work. Confronting poachers is the mission.

In the bush war against poachers, being a game scout is one of the most dangerous jobs a man can perform. Poachers are armed with everything from antique muzzle-loading rifles and shotguns to AK-47s. The civil war in Mozambique has produced gun-smuggling rings who are selling poachers land mines, RPGs and endless supplies of ammunition.

To comprehend poachers' motivation, consider how rhino horn sells for as much as \$10,000 per kilo while rare cycad plants go for \$150 to \$75,000, depending on size.

Training game scouts is the responsibility of the Gold Fields Training Center. Poultney's appointment as training officer affirms the position wildlife managers support: that military-style operations and training are the only effective counter-poaching tactics.

Poultney's experience as an infantry officer and later as a nature conservation officer in Natal for the military serves him well in his current command position. He has developed a list of 20 objectives the graduating game scout must meet or exceed, including being fit enough to run 2.4km in 12 minutes and/or 8km in 40 minutes — in uniform, carrying a rifle.

"Our game scouts must leave here physically fit and well-trained in the basics," Poultney explained. "Their lives will depend on how well they are trained here at the center."

Game scout candidates are taught a variety of classroom subjects including identification of local flora and fauna, along with an understanding of principles ranging from soil conservation to wildlife management. "Scouts must be able to do more than patrol," Poultney said. "They must be able to explain the concepts of conservation to the civilians they meet."

Training combines military and police procedures. Scouts patrol in groups of two or

three men, using hand and arm signals on patrol, so tactical movements and patrol procedures are a daily routine. When a patrol does encounter poaching activity they must either make an arrest on their own or get reinforcements. If the scout makes an arrest he must collect the evidence and statements to build a solid court case. If reinforcements are sent for, the scout needs the training to direct them to the poachers. Finally, the game scout must be prepared to fight.

"We don't want our scouts taking on a group of poachers who are armed with automatic weapons. But sometimes they don't have a choice," Poultney noted.

Respect for game rangers is something Poultney is trying to build at the training center. He has developed an NCO course to turn promising game scouts into NCOs, furthering a feeling of professionalism among scouts. "We're not limiting the training to scouts from Kangwane," he said. "We've trained game scouts for some of game ranches in South Africa and Swaziland, and we've had scouts from organizations such as the Mondi Timber Company go through the course."

British military traditions are prevalent throughout the training center; these include close-order drill and formal military courtesies displayed by trainees, scouts, instructors and other rangers. The discipline pays dividends when the training moves into patrolling and weaponry phases.

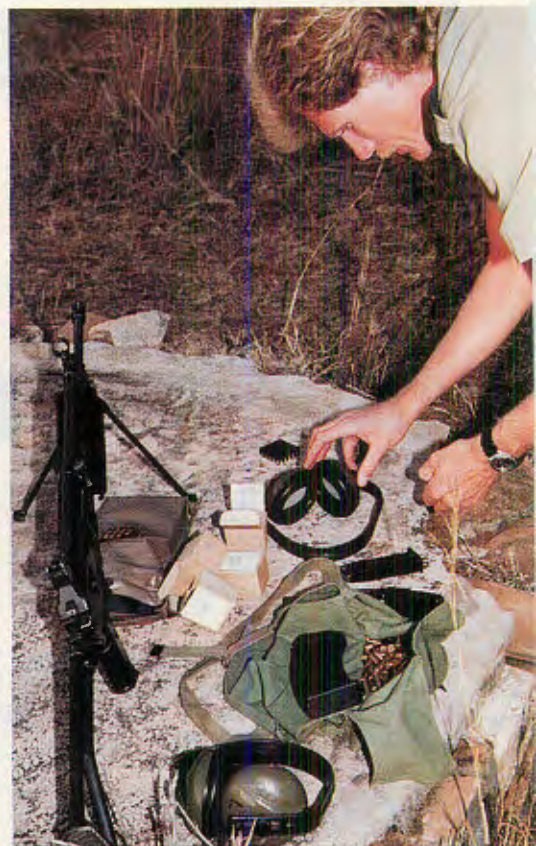
"Many of these trainees," the instructor explained, "are afraid of the rifles when they first get here. We use the discipline from drill and the influence of rank to work them through this fear, so they can handle the weapons."

After graduation, Kangwane scouts are issued 8mm Mausers. The ammunition is expensive and difficult to obtain, which discourages poachers from stealing the scout's rifle and ammo. In the school the trainees work with pre-World War II 7.92mm bolt-action Mausers. Other equipment, from binoculars to compasses, is in short supply; high-tech gear is unheard of.

To save money, the center reloads its own 7.92mm ammo in a small reloading room using a single-stage RCBS press. The dies, case trimmer and priming tool are all worn-out, but getting replacements to the center is nearly impossible so they "make do" with the timeworn presses and dies.

The Gold Fields Training Center is a critical asset in the poaching war. The center's success depends on people like Clive Poultney and his wife Jeanné who are willing to give up the soft city life and move to the bush regions of South Africa, training men to stand on the line against poaching.

— G. G.



Clive Poultney, training officer at the Gold Fields Training Center, spends much of his time at the range teaching marksmanship and familiarization with the South African R4 assault rifle to new game scouts.

but no poachers — they didn't come in.

In the predawn, we left the water hole and I returned to parks headquarters with Changouin. The scouts slipped into the bush to camp for the day. They would return to the water hole after dark and set up again. Antipoaching operations are waiting games, dragging on through days of boredom until contact is made or the op is canceled.

For me, the operation was over. Back in Nelspruit, Changouin and I bought coffee in a small deli, then stood on the sidewalk watching the dawn and talking about poachers while waiting for Anderson and Poultney to return. I kept thinking Changouin looked more like television's Lieutenant Columbo than a senior ranger facing a full day's work — that evening he would rejoin the scouts and wait through the night, another player in the poaching war.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Although the author, SOF's *Outdoor Affairs* Editor, was briefed on how intelligence for the above operation was developed and then implemented, SOF Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown, Dr. Anderson and the author all believe the details regarding intelligence sources, size of game scout teams, times of arrival and other particulars should not be revealed. ✕

poachers is like any other military operation: hurry up and wait.

We received our assignments. Poultney was paired off with Dr. Anderson on one water hole. I was assigned to another group headed by Senior Ranger Laurent Changouin. To avoid detection, we waited until late afternoon to leave the offices with our scouts.

In the reserve we hurried into position, setting up hours before the expected arrival of the poachers. Once in position, the waiting began.

Hours dragged past. The IR Game Finder SOF had brought along for Kangwane Parks (See "Body Heat" on page 60.) picked up zebra, impala, warthogs and cape buffalo around the water hole,

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AFRIKAANER

Continued from page 35

round. It weighs 62 grains and contains a hardened-steel penetrator frontal core, with a lead base encased in a copper alloy jacket.

Critics have stated that the M855's lethality was reduced because a faster rifling twist of one turn in 7 inches (1:7") was selected for the U.S. M16A2 in order to stabilize the M8566 tracer round with its much longer Belgian L110 projectile. This same argument was presented when the M16's original barrel twist of 1:14" was changed to 1:12" more than 30 years ago. Once again, there is confusion between stability in flight and yawing in living tissue. One does not necessarily follow as a consequence of the other. In fact, at ranges up to 200 yards and somewhat beyond, the M855 bullet's performance in the human body essentially duplicates that of the older M193 round and actually produces slightly increased fragmentation.

It is true that firing M855 ammo in rifles with a barrel twist of 1:12" will result in severe yawing (or "key-holding") of the projectile in flight — to such an extent that at even very close ranges the weapon's accuracy potential is reduced to unacceptable levels. ☒

CLOAKS & DAGGERS

Continued from page 55

head. "So I think this is unfair, because then a citizen must give information to the secret service and still might not get access to the information that is being kept."

And Einweg isn't convinced the Stasi were the only bad guys in Germany. "If the Stasi files are opened," he asks, "why not open the files of the West German secret service?"

"There have been spectacular disclosures," Einweg marvels. "People were secretly spied on, telephones were tapped, audio and video monitors were placed in flats and offices."

What he doesn't mention is that former Stasi members, finding themselves in unemployment lines, have run ads in German newspapers to the effect of: "Under surveillance? Phones tapped? Hire us — we can find the bugs for you — after all, we put them there in the first place."

I particularly enjoy this example of impromptu capitalism. *Hey, why not. We put them there.*

The Bulgarian hosts are not rushing to follow the German model. Their secret-police files are still sealed, as their new parliament debates the pros and cons of making spy dossiers public. Not that there's any question Bulgarian spies pulled off some of the Cold War's dirtiest deals.

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Bulgarians used the poisoned umbrella trick to take out an enemy in London, and they're still suspected of involvement in shooting the pope. As the new Bulgarian interior minister, Yordon Sokolov, told his assembled colleagues: "The Bulgarian intelligence services are accountable for hiding, and even helping, corruption of power in the past."

Yet, there's been no wholesale house-cleaning of the Bulgarian CIA. "There is a danger that has not been overcome," Sokolov acknowledged. "We think it still exists right now."

Some, like the unsmiling, beady-eyed little Romanian representative, Dumitru Cristea, do not seem to agree with this new philosophy of "files are public records."

"An intelligence officer," Cristea said, "needs to reach a state of pure actuality of a Solomon. We have totally solved the problem of files regarding those who suffered under the *Securitate*. We intend to destroy all files except those with a political value."

Bulgaria's top spy, Major General Brigo Asparuhov, agreed in a more publicly acceptable fashion. "I wouldn't like to reveal the files to anyone who wishes to have a look at them. This is unacceptable. I don't think it is proper to open the files. Why should we cause new tragedies? We should close this page of history and open the next page."

Burn The Dossiers

Asparuhov recommended burning the worrisome materials. Clearly, his dominant concern was that his agents would suffer if the files were made public, because he emotionally added, "The dossiers should not cause more tragedy for this nation. Those who work for the intelligence services are a source of national pride."

However, after chatting with some of his comrades during a break in the proceedings, Asparuhov amended his comments, saying that before the files are destroyed victims should be able to read their own dossiers.

There is no cut-and-dried solution to the files question for the spies. "We're drafting laws about data storage," offers Istvan Chladesk, deputy director for the Hungarian national security service, but he is not real specific as to what those laws will consist of.

Piotr Naimski, chief of the Polish office for state protection, worries aloud about possibilities of blackmail if the files are opened wide. "In our buildings there is some knowledge preserved there in the archives," he put it tactfully. "We have to solve the problem in the near future." He doesn't suggest how this will be accomplished.

Ah, but enough of this pontification. On to the real problem at hand — what exactly are these super spies planning to

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do with their lives in the New World Order? As Colby pointed out, at one time the various agents sitting around the long table had locked each other up in prisons or sent assassins out to terminate each other with, as they say, extreme prejudice.

One after another of the representatives of spy agencies rose to speak to the gathering about that very problem. They all agreed, in these public sessions, that they should be working together against the common threats of terrorism, narcotics traffickers and money laundering. It was only during coffee breaks, dinners and cocktail parties that even these professional spies allowed their lips to loosen up a bit.

During one of the mixers, a robust old Bulgarian leaned over to our ex-CIA director with a wry smile. "Mr. Colby," he said slowly, "I have to tell you, in 1948 I was thrown in prison, charged with being an American spy."

The Bulgarian is Ruen Krumov. He's 78 years old now, and has come to terms with his false imprisonment. "They wanted in '48 that I confess I was an agent," he explained. During those dark Cold War days when Stalinism ruled Bulgaria, he was interrogated non-stop for 15 days and nights, being told repeatedly he must confess to being an American agent. "I confessed nothing, but I spent five years in prison."

It quickly becomes apparent that many

old communist spies have managed simply to announce that their affiliations changed to democracy, and have stayed on the job. None of the countries that overthrew their dictators when the Iron Curtain ripped open decided to do away with secret services, in spite of all the alleged abuses perpetrated by those same spies — internally and internationally — during the communist years. They have just cut their budgets, trimmed here, cut a little there.

As Bulgaria's top spy, Asparuhov rationalizes his current force, many of them holdovers from the communist dictatorship days. "It doesn't serve Bulgaria's interest to fire them," he claimed. He says he only got rid of those agents who couldn't change with the times. Those he kept on the payroll are "intelligent people, capable of changing their attitudes."

Quickly, one might add — quickly.

Other agents have brought along carefully thought-out lists of "Why we are still needed." They all seem to read about the same: *Gotta' stop those darn narcotics traffickers* (oh yeah, the KGB is going to stop crack sales — I have a little trouble with this one), *corner and control the terrorists* (some of whom were, until recently, supported by these very same people), *fight industrial espionage and generally make the world a better place for mankind.*

Well, except for the United States.

"We" have not made any cuts in our intelligence budget, citing problems in the Middle East, wars that are likely to break out in former communist countries when minor generals are given the keys to the armory, as well as the real possibility that spies who were fired from the above agencies may now be at their most dangerous as they wander, unattached to any organization, working as freelancers for whoever has the hard cash to pay them.

And the spying, of course, continues. On the last day of the conference, four Russian "diplomats" are expelled from Belgium, charged with espionage.

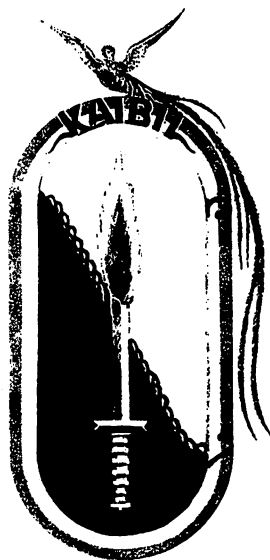
Krumov, the man who spent five years in a communist prison because they thought he might be an American spy, supports this view. He is now a journalist. He's writing, not only because he's motivated to report the news, but also to augment his meager pension. He brings home 500 *leva* per month in retirement benefits, plus 50 more for his military service during the war. It comes to a little over \$25 per month, barely enough for groceries. He's covering the spy convention with cynicism, watching skeptically as the agents and intelligence officers claim to be preparing to work together.

"I don't believe that they are friends," he says in measured tones of disgust. "It's not possible there can be eternal friendship among all these spies. It's only a facade. They still spy on each other."

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Bottom line? I mean, how does this affect you and me? Especially me; after all, I pay the rent, some months at least, by writing about intelligence collection and spying. Am I out of work — on the streets, about to be homeless?

Well no, not exactly. At the moment I am corresponding with the KGB, trying to convince them I should be one of the first journalists to come to Russia in order to study counterintelligence at their "university" where they have just announced they will be more than happy to take any Westerners with the hard cash to pay their "tuition."

Study with the KGB? What would James Bond think? What will John le Carré write about? Where have all the bad guys gone?

And why am I not totally convinced that having all these professional spies looking for a paying gig and being buddy-buddy with each other is the very best idea for civilization as we know it?

Well I guess I'm just a cynic, and by the time this article appears all the drug trafficking, terrorism and private espionage will have been brought to a screeching halt by the new-old spies ...

Hallelujah!

PS — My hostess at the \$4-per-night home-turned-into-a-hotel asked me, in carefully prepared English, to be sure to invite any of my friends from California

that were sure to be soon flocking to the new paradise of Sofia to stay at her house. Consider yourself invited.

Scott French is a Northern California-based writer specializing in surveillance and espionage topics.

HO CHI MINH TRAIL

Continued from page 39

are paying local people, how do they know they are getting the correct information? They made the same mistake in Vietnam. They'd better put people on the ground so they know what they are doing, and then maybe they can make some rational decisions."

After the airport, we went to deliver supplies to another section of the front line. This time daylight revealed just how rudimentary the trenches really were. The one along which we now crept, snaking across gardens and over fields, was only 3½ feet deep, a pitiful defense against the greater might of Yugoslav artillery and armor.

In order to improve on the lamentably poor bunker-digging efforts of the Moslem militia, Pace had devised a portable bunker system. This was an ingenious, instant strongpoint. Built for three men, it had twin steel skins and was lined with

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Rural Combat

The Moslems also suffered from shortages of heavy weapons and even basic infantry-support weapons, such as mortars. Opposed to them and entrenched on the other side of the valley waited what had been Europe's third-largest army prior to the breakup of Yugoslavia.

I followed as Pace moved cautiously forward to observe the Yugoslav army positions from a burnt-out farm in front of the trenches. The enemy paid close attention and expressed their disapproval by sniping. As incoming rounds ricocheted off the nearby walls, our escort, with more bravado than sense, returned fire.

The empty farmhouse room reverberated with the concussion of magazines blasted off on full automatic; dust kicked up by the firing drifted out of the broken windows. Concerned the dust would give away our position, Pace ordered everyone to move back to safer rooms in the rear.

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| T. Kopp | Mosecraft |
| J. Krauss | True-Grit |
| J. Lambert | T. Parker |

Unslung his own AK. Pace crept out alone into the overgrown garden and took up a fire position in the tall grass, calmly observing the enemy position. He identified the source of fire and picked out an individual target, then engaged in a controlled exchange of fire on semiautomatic until his target ceased to return fire. Then, before the situation could escalate further, he ordered a hasty retreat.

I needed no encouragement. As we ran, hunched low between the farm buildings, sporadic small-arms fire still smacked through the clay tiling above our heads and spattered through orchard branches, spraying the ground around us with bits of bark and twigs. A day in the life of Giles Pace certainly had its moments.

Lonely Vigil

The next day, my brief tour of Lukavac completed, it was time to head south before more bad weather could close the road. Pace escorted me back to Split, where he began yet another tireless round of checking with humanitarian aid organizations, searching for food to carry on his next convoy.

He was also mounting a one-man effort to draw media and U.N. attention to the availability of the Tuzla airport. He had tried to approach U.S. Embassy officials to offer them information about the airport, its facilities and the local security situation. Having none of their own personnel to advise on the situation on the ground, one might assume the embassy staff would welcome his offer. Pace described their reaction:

"Being a former Vietnam vet, I got a very cool reception from the American Embassy. First words out of their mouths — they are going to tear up my citizenship!" He paused, struck by a different thought, then went on, "If other Vietnam vets knew about the situation here, they would be here helping me, I guarantee it."

While the airport at Tuzla remains unused, all supplies will have to travel overland. With the onset of winter, this road lifeline will inevitably be cut. When this happens, there could be large-scale starvation for northern Bosnia.

Meanwhile, Lukavac awaited Pace's return. I did not envy him his lone vigil, perched atop a truck cradling an AK-47 as the convoy snaked its way back along the dangerous path of Bosnia's Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Peter Douglas is an experienced combat photojournalist who has covered wars for Soldier Of Fortune in Afghanistan, Cambodia and Liberia. ✍

SMOKING GUNS

Continued from page 29

in Southeast Asia.

Two weeks later, the Senate Foreign



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 F. E. Eyman, MO
 Manuel Fernandez, CA
 Chief David Howells, PA
 Roy Innis, NY
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 Chief Kayne B. Robinson, IA
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 Lt. Harry Thomas, OH
 James T. Brown, TX
 Raymond W. Dinnan, NV
 Jack First, CA
 Joe Nava, AK
 Dennis M. Sundermeyer, MI
 James Valentino Jr., IL

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Robert K Brown

Relations Committee approved a similar proposal.

On May 31, the full Senate *rejected* a Republican-sponsored amendment which would have made the cutoff of American military activity in Laos and Cambodia contingent upon the North Vietnamese making a good faith effort to account for all MIAs.

In response to my presentations, Le Duc Tho disdainfully read me editorials from the American press and speeches from the *Congressional Record* ...

Under such conditions, we had no bargaining position left. I had one final meeting with the North Vietnamese in December 1973. I remember being armed with a long list of violations to raise with them, including the fact that Hanoi had failed utterly to comply with the agreements on MIAs. As I recall the meeting, Le Duc Tho's response was even more contemptuous than six months earlier ...The Paris Accords contained clear and binding commitments that all prisoners throughout Indochina would be accounted for and returned. If the Vietnamese violated these provisions it was not because of any omission by the responsible U.S. officials, but because we had been stripped of the weapons we might have used to enforce that commitment.

I am proud of what my colleagues and I accomplished under heartbreakingly difficult circumstances. I challenge critics of the Accords to say precisely how they would have achieved a better outcome under those circumstances. ☒

TRIGGERLOCK

Continued from page 59

him for doing."

Ward was careful not to condemn Project Triggerlock as a whole, but he asserted it was unfairly applied in the case of his client. "As a tool against the habitual armed career criminal, [Triggerlock] is a good idea. In some cases, though, I think it has been perverted to target other law-abiding citizens who in no way meet the government's stated criteria for prosecution [and] leaves decisions on who gets hammered to the discretion of BATF agents in the field — that is a scary situation."

Cases like Fleming's, Lawmaster's and Knudson's could be more easily dismissed as occasional aberrations were it not for the BATF's history of "significant deviations" from self-proclaimed missions.

After a round of U.S. Senate hearings in 1982, the BATF leadership was chided for unprofessional behavior in a report by the Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution; the report concluded there was "little doubt that the [BATF] had disregarded rights guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United

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States." Echoing issues raised following the Lawmaster and Knudson raids, the report charged that the BATF "trampled upon the Second Amendment by chilling exercise of the right to keep and bear arms by law-abiding citizens" and had "offended the Fourth Amendment by unreasonably searching and seizing private property. It had ignored the Fifth Amendment by taking property without just compensation and by entrapping honest citizens without regards for their due process of law."

The report deemed the BATF's rebuttal testimony at the time as "utterly unconvincing." Instead, the Senate subcommittee determined that "Seventy-five percent of BATF gun prosecutions were aimed at ordinary citizens who had neither criminal intent nor knowledge, but were enticed by agents into unknowing technical violations."

"All this indicates that BATF's claims, both of focus upon gun-using criminals and of recent reforms, are empty words," the 1982 Senate report concluded.

Local Law Benefits

Perhaps with Project Triggerlock, the BATF has finally kept its word. One thing is certain — local law enforcement agencies who are enjoying the benefits of expanded resources are not about to look a gift horse in the mouth.

"Over the past three years, they [federal law enforcement] have seemed more willing to cooperate with the little people like us," said Sgt. Daniel Hawley of the Gaston County, North Carolina, Police Department. "Several years ago, it was kind of unheard-of for us to even think about going to federal court. Now they are constantly offering to help."

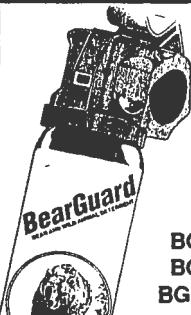
Time, and the probity — or lack of such — of BATF agents in the field will make or break Project Triggerlock. It could turn out to be the biggest boon against violent crime for decades to come. Or, if abuses like those used against the Knudsons or John Lawmaster continue to come to light, then Triggerlock could get BATF called onto the congressional carpet again.

"I'm sure BATF will continue to publish these stunning statistics," remarked Steve Sessinghaus, a Tulsa attorney who represents Lawmaster. "But I can't help but wonder how many more cases are out there like John Lawmaster's that we haven't heard about."

James L. Pate is a former SOF staffer and Capitol Hill correspondent.

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SILVER BADGE

Continued from page 51

truck's front tire.

Then we lay facedown beside the highway and waited. Just before 2200, the sound of approaching truck engines

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Robert K. Brown

grew ever gradually, until they seemed to roar like an approaching diesel locomotive — one finally rolled exactly up to the claymores and *KA-BOOM!* — I blew the mines. Just as fast. Yancey, Krupa, Woody and I assaulted the Soviet-made GAZ-63 truck that had lurched to a stop in front of us.

In virtually three seconds, Yancey had the driver jerked from the cab and onto the ground while Krupa slid a plastic restraint on the enemy's wrists.

I'll never forget the amazing vision of Krupa with his Kodak Instamatic and flashcubes, standing in the middle of the notorious Ho Chi Minh Trail flashing away as I tossed a satchel charge in the truck and placed a time-delay thermite grenade on its hood. Seconds later I shouted the order to withdraw, which Woody backed up with a whistle just as we'd rehearsed — then a hidden enemy soldier shot Woody — bad, through both arms. Jaco took hold of Woody and led him back toward the rally point. Krupa and Yancey dragged away the enemy prisoner.

By process of elimination, that left only me at the truck, so I began exchanging fire with several enemy soldiers to buy time for everyone to get together at the rally point. Meanwhile our other men were igniting time fuzes for more than 40 assorted claymore mines and grenades, to create a sort of minefield behind us that would cook off for some 45 minutes to hit other trucks as well as confuse and delay the many North Vietnamese soldiers converging on the ambush site.

At the rally point, Galaso — an SF medic — patched Woody up as best he could. Despite great pain (both forearms had been shattered by AK bullets), Woody refused morphine for fear it would slow us down. He was one tough man.

Meanwhile one of the Montagnards was missing. We could not wait or look for him — we had to get out of there immediately.

We ran through that pitch-black jungle most of the night, pausing only to treat Woody or check the prisoner's restraints. After about an hour, a special Forward Air Controller arrived overhead with, as he promised us, "unlimited air." Therefore, with the flames of burning trucks perfectly flickering a beacon for U.S. fighters, continuous bombs fell around the ambush site until just before dawn.

Shortly after daylight, Hueys from the 57th Assault Helicopter Company arrived overhead, escorted by Cobra gunships from the 361st Attack Helicopter Company. Then a pair of A-1 Skyraiders put in cluster bombs

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right across us, but somehow we weren't hit.

And in a matter of minutes, the Hueys swooped in and we were gone — we'd made it out. The missing Montagnard was found by a SOG helicopter a day later and safely retrieved.

Off To Saigon

After our tumultuous welcome on the CCC helipad, I barely had time to drop off my gear in the RT California team room when the recon first sergeant told me that a SOG C-130 had been diverted from another mission and would arrive in 10 minutes to transport the prisoner and myself to Saigon. Piloted by Chinese civilians, these unmarked SOG C-130s were equipped with the Fulton "Skyhook" Recovery System and state-of-the-art electronic warfare gear.

Sure enough, 10 minutes later a C-130 arrived and I led the tied-up truck driver aboard. We were the only passengers. But because this was all impromptu, the Chinese pilot landed at Saigon's Tan Son Nhut civilian terminal instead of the more out-of-the-way Air America ramp.

Still unshaven with traces of camouflage stick smeared across my face, I walked the handcuffed North Vietnamese prisoner across the tarmac; once he'd seen the amazing reality of a bustling, modern airport he started to get a bit antsy. To help settle his nerves and re-establish perspective, I put the muzzle of my .45 automatic to his right temple and held it there as we ambled the 100 yards to the less-conspicuous military terminal. This therapy proved instantly effective and calmed him right down.

I shall always recall the aghast faces of USAF and rear-echelon Army types at that terminal, who took one glance at the approaching haggard Sfer with a .45 auto pressed to his bound captive, then suddenly remembered they had to go somewhere else. Despite some 50 U.S. personnel around us, not a one attempted to make small talk during the 10 minutes we waited for a SOG unmarked commercial van to arrive and take us away.

Afterward, I began to thirst mightily for a cold beer, then I learned SOG's deputy chief, Col. Ross Franklin, and I had a most important appointment: General Creighton Abrams, commander of all U.S. forces in Vietnam, wanted to see us.

I hurriedly donned a fresh set of jungle fatigues and rushed to a barbershop for a shave and haircut with a SOG sergeant major escorting me to ensure I didn't find that cold beer.

That evening we traveled to MACV headquarters, where we briefed the general on Mission Ashtray II. Abrams' kind words surprised me, for his public reputation was rabidly anti-SF —

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Robert K Brown

remember, this was the man who had the 5th Special Forces Group commander, Col. Robert Rhealt, arrested and charged with the murder of a Vietnamese double agent a year earlier. But I must give the old general credit for putting aside philosophical differences and paying compliments to Special Forces and SOG at the end of our briefing. When Abrams shook my hand and asked that I congratulate all my men, he meant it.

It was a hell of a day: deep in Laos and evading enemy pursuers in predawn darkness and by dusk face-to-face in Saigon with the commander of all U.S. forces. And an hour later, in an air-conditioned bar no less, I beheld more beer than I could possibly consume. What a country! My only regret was that I was not among my Ashtray II ambusher comrades celebrating that night.

What became of the eight Americans from Mission Ashtray II is an accurate, microcosmic indicator of the dangers SOG men faced.

Severely shot through both arms during the convoy ambush, Richard Woody was stabilized at a hospital in Vietnam, then medevaced back to the States. He fully recovered.

Although Paul Kennicott came through our ambush unscathed, he was badly wounded almost a year later while reconning about five miles east of where we'd ambushed that night convoy. He, too, was medevaced stateside.

Krupa fell from a hovering helicopter after being hit by an AK round — he is MIA to this day.

John Yancey, who dragged our enemy prisoner from the truck and led him through the jungle that long, dark night, later received the Distinguished Service Cross for another recon mission, in which he single-handedly defended a fallen comrade too badly wounded to walk. Although the man died, John courageously held off enemy attackers for more than an hour until a relief force could arrive — I think he deserved the Medal of Honor. One of Delta Force's earliest counterterrorists, John was at Desert One in Iran in 1980 during the failed hostage rescue attempt. Later, due to another Delta Force trooper's human error, John was killed in a live-fire training exercise three years ago. We all miss him a lot.

Slightly more than one year after Ashtray II, Fred Krupa was leading a company-size SOG raiding force on the Cambodian border when he fell from a hovering helicopter after being hit by an AK round. I was there, directly overhead in a USAF O2A Forward Air Control aircraft, and although we put in many air

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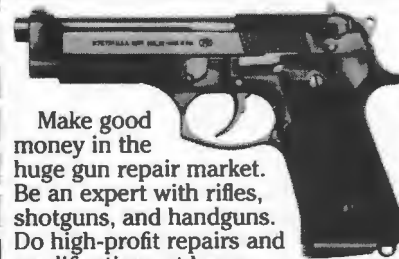
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strikes and tried to launch a rescue mission, we never got Fred back. He is MIA to this day. God bless him.

The rest of our team, at last count, were still alive.

Major John Plaster (USAR, ret.) served three years in MACV-SOG on five different Recon Teams during 1968-71. He was decorated four times for heroism, and wounded once. Besides working as a police- and military-sniper instructor, Plaster authored The Ultimate Sniper: An Advanced Training Manual for Military and Police Snipers, available from Paladin Press, Dept. SOF, Box 1307, Boulder CO 80306; phone: 303-443-7250.

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- J.P. ✕

ADVERTISERS INDEX

Adco	72	SOF Gold Ring	64
Al Mar Knives	Cover 4	SOF Pen/Pencil Offer	78
Alpec Team	70	SOF Safari	Cover 3
CCS	65	Sonic Technologies	70
Central Mobile		Women & Guns	21
Communication	8		
Cold Steel	68	SUPPLY LOCKER	
Collector's Armoury	71	Alpha Publications	75
Dillman Karate Int'l	69	Auto-Ordnance Corp.	77
Double Day Military	Cover 2	Cutlery Shoppe	78
The Edge Company	22 & 23	David Steele Ent.	75
EK Commando Knife Co.	15	Eagle Industries Unfd.	77
Emergency Field Hospital	72	Eden Press	76
Excalibur Enterprises	13	Greene Military Dist.	77
Executive Protection	24	Gun Parts Corp.	75
Facets Advertising Agency	67	International Military Antiques	76
Fotozines	11	Jimmy Lile Handmade	77
GA Sneakers	68	LA Law Enforcers	77
Genesis Delivery Systems	66	LRRP K-9 Services	76
Hamblen Sales	73	Matthews Police Supply	78
Heckler & Koch, Inc	12	National ID Center	77
Hi Tech Computer Graphics	24	Patriot Productions	76
ISECO Inc.	19	Silverbans	75
J W McFarlin	68	Smithy Co	76
Kaufman's West	25	Trident Security Products	75
Machine Gun News	65	U.S. Cavalry Inc.	78
Orpheus	74	USI Corporation	75
Paladin Press	7	Westbury Sales	75
Professional Career	73	World-Image	76
Rimfire Productions	70		
S.T.A.N.O.	9		
Shotgun News	26		
SOF Compass/Watch Offer	64		

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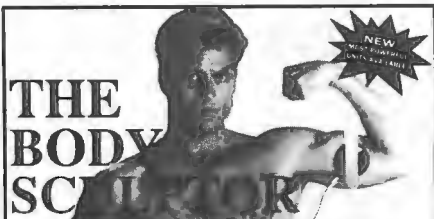
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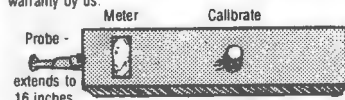
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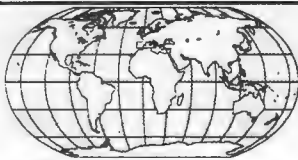
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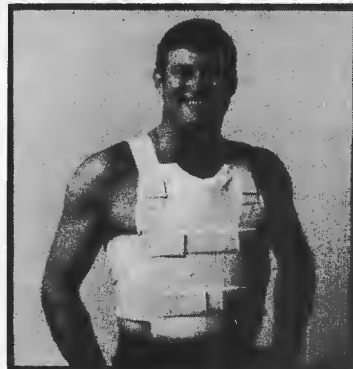
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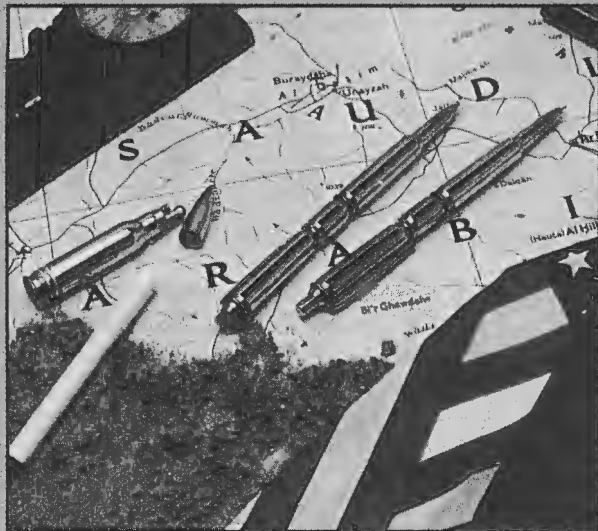


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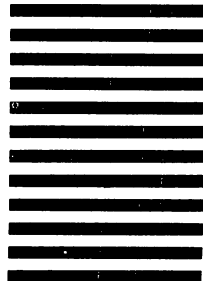
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